

£115m retail village visitors will get refund in plans

NO TOLL FEES FOR OUTLET SHOPPERS

Report by Marion Brennan

DRIVERS visiting the new £115 million Mill Green Designer Outlet Village in Cannock, via the M6 Toll will not have to pay the usual fee, under new plans.

The development has previously come under fire as potentially it could have a negative impact on Walsall retailers.

Talks are in progress to waive the usual cost of using the 27-mile motorway, with drivers paying upfront but having the cost refunded at Mill Green. The 132-outlet site was given the final seal of approval by the Secretary of State for Local Government last week after 12 months in the planning process but aspects of the scheme are still under negotiation.

Mill Green's catchment area will extend from north Birmingham to south Manchester. It is also expected that tourists from further away would also visit, with the scheme being compared to the likes of Bicester Village near Oxford. Cannock Chase Council leader George Adamson said the no-fee idea would be an incentive for people in Birmingham to visit the new shopping site, the biggest of its kind in the West Midlands.

Involvement

He said: "Nothing has been decided yet but the idea, and it's a good one, is on the table."

A spokesman for Midland Expressway, which operates the M6 Toll, said: "We are in ongoing dialogue with the developers to understand their plans and what involvement the M6 Toll might have in supporting this development."

Meanwhile, Cannock Chase MP Amanda Milling has spoken of her support for the designer outlet village, saying it will put the town 'on the map'. Phase one of the scheme will see 81 outlets built creating around 1,000 jobs.

A further 48 units will be built in phase two as well as a multi-storey car park, bringing the total number of parking spaces to around 2,000. Bosses are hoping to attract firms including Lacoste, Diesel, Cath Kidson, Jack Wills and Polo Ralph Lauren. The complex is predicted to bring in three million visitors a year and is expected to open in 2018.

However, the potential of the village to draw away business from nearby town centres, including Walsall, has been brought into question. Laurence Homes, from commercial property agency GVA, which has an interest in other shopping complexes in the region, said: "It will just draw price-sensitive shops away from town centres like Walsall."

REWARD ON OFFER TO FIND HIT-AND-RUN DRIVER



Hit-and-run victim Mark Rennison, who has been left severely disabled after being knocked off his bike, with his father Gregory

A FATHER left severely disabled after a suspected hit-and-run has received the support of a local businessman, who is offering a £10,000 reward to catch the person responsible.

The cash reward was first offered 12 months to the day since the incident took place, for information leading to a conviction.

Mark Rennison, aged 36, says he was riding along Slacky Lane in Bloxwich around 5.20pm on December 13 last year when he was hit by a car. He said: "The car came around the corner but took it too wide and crossed over on to my side of the road. He had been proper going for it between the estates. I heard him coming but I didn't expect him to come around the corner on the wrong side. All I could see is

lights coming at me. The next thing I remember is waking up in the hospital."

Mr Rennison was taken to Walsall Manor Hospital. He said he could not feel anything from the neck down.

He was later transferred to Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital in Oswestry where his condition improved with rehabilitation. But he still has no use of his right arm while his right leg is 'like a lump of jelly', he said. "I was absolutely terrified that I couldn't move," said Mr Rennison. "I thought 'would I have been better off dying?' "But I spoke to a Catholic priest who gave me a sense of well-being and calm."

Mr Rennison, whose nine-year-old son and 14-year-old step-daughter live in France, is

current residing at Victoria House care home in Tipton awaiting for his home to be adapted with modifications. His father Gregory Rennison, who he describes as his 'rock', will be living with him.

Police have never arrested anyone in connection with the suspected collision and now a Walsall businessman, who wished to remain anonymous, has provided a substantial cash incentive for information.

Mr Rennison added: "I used to be very active, I used to have long walks every day and long bike rides. I have had all of that taken from me. I have been robbed of my life."

Anyone with information on the incident should contact police on 101 using incident reference 1839 of December 13, 2014.

COUNCIL

Unpaid parking fines at £350k

CASH-STRAPPED Walsall council is owed more than £350,000 in unpaid parking fines and penalties.

It has sparked claims that bosses should chase up the cash as it faces £25 million of cuts.

A Freedom of Information request has revealed that £390,332 is currently outstanding in parking fines and penalties owed to the authority.

Charges range from £25 to £70 relating to the offence and whether payment is made within 14 days.

Tickets are issued for a range of offences from staying too long in car parks or on-street bays to being on double-yellow lines.

Councillor Sean Coughlan, Labour leader, said: "It does concern me that the collection rates for parking fines are so poor. Collection seems to be a real problem for this council, not just in terms of parking fines."

"I have some major concerns over this council's ability to set a policy, whether that is one which people agree with or not and stick to it."

"I know parking fines aren't a popular idea but the fact is this council has chosen to enforce them, yet it doesn't seem able to do that."

The council has had to defend itself in the past from allegations that it uses parking fines as a 'cash cow', however fines have decreased over the last few years, as well as the number of people paying them.

PETITION

New year blow as social club to shut

A SOCIAL club at a Great Barr church that has been open for nearly four decades will close after leaders said they can no longer afford to keep it running.

The Dove Club, which is attached to St Matthew's Church, in Birdbrook Road, was closing after its New Year's Eve celebrations today (Thursday).

Church leaders said the move was due to a downward trend in bar finances.

A petition has been signed by more than 200 people who have protested to keep the club open.

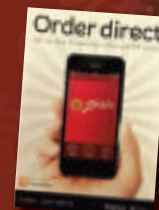


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Man who kicked dog sought by RSPCA



The RSPCA image of a man it wants to trace

THE RSPCA is hunting for a man suspected of kicking his dog in the stomach and head.

A concerned passer-by contacted the animal welfare charity after witnessing an attack in Stour-bridge. They claimed to have seen a man kicking a tan German Shepherd-type dog in the stomach and the head on Lye bypass, opposite the junction to Clinic Drive.

The RSPCA has now released a photograph of a man it wants

to trace, which was taken by the witness following the incident at around 2.30pm on November 23.

Stomach

RSPCA inspector Josef Burgess said: "We are appealing to anyone with any information about this incident to come forward and let us know as we are concerned about the safety of the dog." The man was seen kicking his dog, who was on a

lead, in the stomach four times and once in the head.

"The person who was seen beating the dog was described as a slim white male, around 5ft 9ins tall, with dark hair and a thin face.

"He was wearing a black tracksuit with the hood up, a black quilted coat, and trainers and he had a small black Adidas bag.

"If you did see the incident, or if you know who the man is, please contact us on 0300 123 8018."

Date set for health centre to open doors

A DATE has been set for the opening of Walsall's revamped walk-in health centre.

The urgent care centre is being relocated to the Saddlers Centre in a £1million project and will officially open to the public on January 20, health chiefs have confirmed.

The current centre based at Market Square, Digbeth, will close the day before. The new facility will be unveiled at 10am on its first day but then operate between the hours of 8am and 8pm.

It will be able to accommodate patients with none life-threatening injuries and illnesses such as minor cuts, burns, bites, sprains, fractures, infections and rashes.

No appointment is necessary.

It is hoped the relocation will help relieve pressure on A&E at Walsall Manor Hospital where the town's other urgent care centre is based and remain open from 7am to midnight.

NHS Walsall Clinical Commissioning Group sanctioned the move in October following a public consultation in the summer.

Suitable

Dr Anand Rischie, local GP and urgent care lead for NHS Walsall CCG, said: "Progress at the new Urgent Care Centre site has been fantastic and we are looking forward to the new building opening in the New Year. From the very start of this project, we have worked closely with the public, local GPs and partners to improve local urgent care services for our communities.

He added: "Urgent care centres aim to help reduce the number of people attending A&E, when they could receive care more appropriately elsewhere.

"We are confident that both urgent care centres will continue to ensure patients are treated by the most suitable NHS service, and allow our busy A&E department to help the people who really need it the most."

Tony Stutchfield, head of urgent care at Primecare which will run the centre, said: "We have been working closely with the commissioners over the past few months and it's great to see that all the hard work has been worth it.

"The new urgent care centre looks fantastic."

Peter's tango is picture perfect



The award-winning picture, Argentine Tango, taken by Smethwick Photographic Society member, Peter Siviter.

TAKE two dancers from Buenos Aires, add a backdrop from Havana and tweak the colours – the result is this award-winning picture from Smethwick Photographic Society member, Peter Siviter.

The retired 74-year-old, who has been snapping away in his spare time since 1976, came away from the international FIAP Clubs' World Cup with full marks and a bronze medal.

And his club did even better by beating 197 groups from across the globe to claim overall first prize. FIAP, or The International Federation of Photography Art, is an international organisation of national associations of photography. Mr Siviter, from Rock near Bewdley, who worked as a business intelligence manager at Dudley's Russells Hall Hospital, beat 4,000 other hopefuls to land his bronze with Argen-

tine Tango. He said: "We travel a lot so a lot of my pictures are of scenery. The female dancer from Buenos Aires was wearing a blue dress and the man was in black but I thought purple would give the picture a more subtle tone. It was quite special for the club to win overall because although we've won a few national awards this is our first international title. We had to send in 20 photos in total, with each one marked out of seven by three judges. Mine was given 21 out of 21."

Mr Siviter, who uses a Nikon Df camera to capture his award-winning images, goes around camera clubs giving talks and still travels around the world taking pictures.

The society, based in The Old School House, Oldbury, will travel to Athens in Greece on February 27 to collect the awards from FIAP.



The 74-year-old

Trader must pay £680k over fake sports gear

A TRADER from Walsall has been ordered to pay more than £680,000 for selling counterfeit clothing at a market in Lincolnshire.

Iftakhar Ahmed, aged 41, and his two twin sons – Asad Iftakhar and Hasan Iftakhar – were handed prison sentences at Lincoln Crown Court in February for selling counterfeit clothing.

But Iftakhar appeared before the same court again last week when a confiscation application was subsequently made against him. After considering the monetary value of his crime, as well as his available assets, Iftakhar Ahmed was ordered to repay £683,144. He must pay the full amount within three months or face a five-year prison sentence. The amount payable will increase with interest during this time.

Counterfeit

Back in 2011, Nike and Adidas joined forces with Lincolnshire Trading Standards and Lincolnshire Police to raid stalls where copies of their trainers were being sold in significant quantities in Ingoldmells.

They seized enough counterfeit clothing to fill two 40ft shipping containers from stalls being operated by Trainerz4U and 350 Sea Lane.

Iftakhar Ahmed was arrested and later released on bail. The officials found more fakes just one year later, infringing the trademarks of such luxury and designer brands as Hunter, Vivienne Westwood, Superdry, Armani, Jack Wills, Hollister, Barbour, Tom's and others.

Pupils put their message on slate

PUPILS made their mark at Lightwoods House – by leaving messages on reclaimed roof slates about to go up on the restored historic building.

Contractors Heritage Building and Conservation Ltd invited children from Year 6 at Lightwoods Primary and Our Lady of Fatima Primary School to leave messages on roof slates for posterity.

The house and park are undergoing a transformation thanks to £3.6 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and the Big Lottery Fund (BIG).

Work on the house and park includes the drinking fountains, 19th Century bandstand, Shakespeare Garden, walls, railings and a pond. Councillor Steve Eling, deputy leader, said: "This is a unique opportunity which I hope will be an enduring memory for the children."

Nailing history in Archives talk

THE next local history talk at Wolverhampton Archives will be on Sunday, January 13.

It starts at 5.30pm and will be on the subject End of an Industry: The Nail-makers of Wombourne.

For details call 01902 552055.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Austin hits out at ex-leader Ed

BLACK Country MP Ian Austin has lashed out at former Labour leader Ed Miliband. The Dudley North MP slammed Red Ed for what he described as 'useless leadership'.

Mr Austin was angry after a leaked private poll revealed that Labour could have reduced the Conservatives' majority in the general election had he promised an EU referendum.

He tweeted: "Didn't know whether to laugh or cry at this. How often did we tell them? Another example of our useless leadership"

It was his second attack on the former Labour leader in the space of eight days as he previously tweeted: "I'm not entirely convinced @Ed Miliband is best placed to advise on a) leadership, b) beating the Tories c) winning elections."

February opening for Friska in Brum

INDEPENDENT fast food chain Friska is to open its first outlet in Birmingham.

The company plans to open its latest eatery in a 1,700 sq ft unit spread across the ground floor and mezzanine of the 13-storey Eleven Brindleyplace building in February. It will initially employ a team of six including a kitchen manager and store manager.

The company, which was founded in 2009, is the brainchild of Griff Holland and Ed Brown, and now operates at six sites across Bristol, with ambitious plans to expand nationwide over the next five years. Griff Holland, founder of Friska, said: "We're really excited to be opening our first store outside Bristol and Birmingham was the obvious destination."

Lawyers helping out food bank

BLACK Country law firm George Green has been helping a local food bank. Cradley Heath Community Link is located on the High Street in Cradley Heath and is run by volunteers alongside St John's Church in Dudley Wood.

Over the past few weeks members of staff have been donating selection boxes, mince pies, Christmas puddings and much more into hampers. George Green, which has offices in Cradley Heath and Wolverhampton, also held a Christmas jumble day.

Facebook sex chat blackmail warning

BLACKMAILERS are tempting men into online sex chats before threatening to expose footage unless victims pay thousands of pounds, police say.

Detectives at West Midlands Police have received a string of reports about such threats since the start of December targeting people in the Black Country. An extortionist has been befriending men on Facebook posing as a woman who flirts.

Two-vehicle crash sees section of m'way shut

A TWO-VEHICLE crash closed the M5 northbound for more than three hours. The smash between Junction 3 and Junction 2 on the northbound carriageway happened at around 6am on Sunday December 20.

Initially the road was closed in both directions, but all lanes on the southbound carriageway reopened around 9.30am. Drivers on the northbound carriageway were trapped for an extra hour following the crash, with the carriageway reopening around 10.30am.

A West Midlands Fire Service spokeswoman said crews from Oldbury had been called after the crash between a lorry and an LPG-powered people carrier. Gas started leaking from the latter so the motorway was closed as a precaution.

Nobody was trapped in either vehicle but one person was injured and taken to hospital.

While the incident was ongoing the Central Motorway Policing Group tweeted: "Vehicle from RTC #M5 still leaking gas, working with @Highway-sWMIDBS & @Oldburyfire to make it safe and open road."

Diversions were put in place via the A456 Quinton Expressway and Hagley Road West, then A4123 Wolverhampton Road to Birchley Island to re-join the M5 at J2.

West Midlands Ambulance Service spokesman Murray MacGregor said a single ambulance attended and the driver of the people carrier was taken to Sandwell General Hospital.

There were no details of the specific injuries suffered by the driver.

4G services on way to village

VODAFONE UK has started to roll out its 4G services in Great Wyrley.

The arrival of Vodafone 4G in Great Wyrley means all customers with compatible devices and bundles will be able to connect to the internet more quickly, more reliably and in more places than ever before. The arrival of 4G also brings Vodafone customers the ability to take advantage of a wide range of entertainment, offering music, sport, movies and TV through Vodafone's content partnerships.

Vodafone has now extended its 4G coverage to 726 larger cities, towns and districts as well as thousands of smaller communities across the UK.

The rollout of 4G services is part of £2 billion Vodafone is spending on its network and services.

Pupil sleepover aids homeless

CHILDREN from a Wolverhampton primary school held a sleepover to raise more than £300 for homeless people in the area. Year five and six pupils from St Bernadette's Catholic in Wombourne took part

March of zombies as businesses at risk



Growing problem of 'zombie' firms

MORE than 5,000 companies in the Black Country and Staffordshire are classed as a 'zombie' firms - meaning they are barely breaking even and are avoiding insolvency courtesy of low interest rates - new figures have revealed.

Out of 8,966 companies registered in Wolverhampton, a total of 1,330 have been classified in the state by business rescue and recovery specialist Begbies Traynor.

One in seven Dudley firms is classed as a zombie; 436 of the 3,349 companies in the town.

In Walsall, the count is 1 in 11 - 583 out of the 6,264 registered businesses - while in West Bromwich it is one in 10, or 131 of the town's 1,281 companies.

And in Staffordshire one in 11 firms are zombie companies, accounting for 3,018 of the 34,703 companies registered in the county. Now, with interest rates expected to rise in the New Year, it is feared it could push many zombie firms off the cliff into collapse.

John Kelly, regional managing partner for Begbies Traynor, said: "The historic low interest rates that

UK consumers have enjoyed over the past few years are also providing a lifeline to tens of thousands of businesses in the Midlands. However, some economists have commented that there is a danger that maintaining this situation is merely storing up problems for the future.

"The problem is that if rates do not increase soon the number of zombie companies will. That means when rates do rise the number of failings is likely to be higher and if not carefully managed could threaten what is still a delicate recovery."

New year jobs fear for 130 workers at firms

MORE than 130 workers at two Willenhall businesses face an uncertain future after administrators were called in.

Laidlaw Interiors Group (LIG), a Nottingham based door handles, ironmongery and partitions group, employ nearly 1,000 people.

Administrators from Deloitte were called in and four of its businesses were almost immediately sold - but three other businesses, included Willenhall-based Laidlaw Ironmongery, which employs 126, and the 12-strong team at Balustrading Solutions, remain unsold, leaving nearly 600 jobs at risk.

The Black Country branches are both based at premises in Strawberry Lane. The administrators say they are currently 'assessing options' for the remaining divisions of Laidlaw in the hopes of selling them to new owners.

The Laidlaw Ironmongery workers broke up for Christmas on Friday December 18, while the Balustrading Solutions team broke up on Wednesday December 23. They have all received their December wages.

Subsidiaries

Richard Hawes, joint administrator at Deloitte, said: "The management of the group has been working hard to explore options to secure the future of all its subsidiaries and, as administrators, we will continue those efforts.

"We are pleased to announce a buyer for just over half of the seven businesses, with no redundancies at this stage, and remain hopeful of achieving further sales post-appointment. LIG has been trading in some very challenging times, and whilst a number of businesses within the portfolio are profitable, the overall trading circumstances have become unsustainable."

LIG is a leading integrated provider of doorsets, ironmongery and partitioning systems to the UK commercial interiors market. The group comprises seven businesses in the UK and also owns a door manufacturer in India and a sales office with warehouse in the Middle East.

Its head office and main centre of activity is in Langley Mill, Nottingham, as well as having centres in Willenhall, Birmingham, Mansfield, Leeds and Crawley. When Deloitte was called in, LIG employed 969 members of staff.

Investment house Valterra has bought four of the businesses, safeguarding 390 jobs.

Queen Vicky finds her prince



Joe Exall, aged 14, from Great Barr gets a kiss in with his idol, Queen of the Jungle Vicky Pattison

SCORES of excited fans queued up around the block to get the chance to meet newly-crowned Queen of the Jungle Vicky Pattison. And just like the name of her second novel, A Christmas Kiss, there were plenty of kisses from fans.

The former Georgie Shore star was in Birmingham for the launch of the novel. Some fans queued up outside WH Smith in Union Street for hours just to get the

chance to meet the star. Vicky, aged 28, was recently crowned the winner of the latest series of I'm a Celebrity...Get Me Out of Here.

While some celebs don't take to the jungle surroundings, Vicky said she was 'devastated' to have to leave after three weeks.

She said: "I absolutely loved it in the jungle - it was the best experience of my life. It was three weeks where I got to let my hair down, not get pulled from pillar

to post and just totally be myself. I got to meet new people and do new things. I did it to show people that I'm not exactly what they think I am - there's lots more to me than meets the eye."

Vicky added: "It was the first time a lot of people had seen elements of my personality. Working in a reality TV show is a lot more structured. But I never look back at Georgie Shore with anything other than fondness."

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THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



THE art of successful public relations is to choose your figures wisely. For example, it is reported that nine out of ten hospitals are short of nurses. This is bad news, but only because the unit of measurement is individual nurses. A smart PR operator, noting the size of so many NHS employees, would point out that the total national weight of nurses is actually rising and the tonnage-per-patient ratio has never been higher. Another success story. More chocolates, please?

I WROTE last week about how moon landings were routine in the 20th century. A reader reminds me that on one Apollo mission in 1971, having run out of sensible things to do on the moon, astronaut Alan Shepard smuggled his golf kit on the mission and drove a golf ball, as he put it, "for miles and miles and miles." May the "fore!" be with you.

WE Brits are a bit shy about our national identity. We don't put our nation's name on postage stamps. We don't know all the words to our national anthem. And we certainly don't have a national dress. Or so I thought until Miss Great Britain, confusingly called Nena France, popped up at the Miss Universe contest in Las Vegas wearing what we are assured is British national dress. It consists of a bejewelled red, white and blue basque, fishnet tights, thonged sandals and enormous showgirl feathers towering over one's head. I've ordered mine already.

HERE'S a lovely present for Prince Charles and his wife, a full-page feature in the Daily Mail headlined: "We could do a lot worse than Camilla, as our Queen."



And in the Sunday Times, another headline: "Admit it: We've come to love Camilla." Expect more of the same. It is part of the softening-up process to persuade the nation, after the Queen's death, to accept Camilla not as queen consort, as the Palace has always promised, but as Queen Camilla.

THE truth is that the queen-consort ruse was nothing more than a temporary measure to placate the Diana fan club. I bet Camilla's queenly crown has already been ordered.

I RECENTLY suggested that in the first Star Wars movie, C3PO delivered Princess Leia's message. It was, of course, R2D2. Apologising to robots; has it come to this?

NEW research suggests there was some truth in that old British marching song, to the tune of Colonel Bogey. Records from before the war reveal that Hitler had one undescribed testicle. Then what of Himmler? Was he, as the same song suggests, very similar? And was Goebbels entirely lacking?

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Rail stations' figures are revealed

THE QUIETEST and busiest railway stations in the Black Country and Staffordshire have been revealed in figures from the rail regulator.

Wolverhampton was the busiest station, with almost 4.5 million entries and exits in the last year, a rise of more than two per cent on the previous year. Sandwell and Dudley recorded the biggest increase.

The data showed Cannock was the

quietest station – with 221,124 entries and exits, a fall of almost 11 per cent on 2013-2014, due to interruptions in service caused by engineering work to electrify the Chase Line.

The 'top of the stops' report, released by the Office of Rail and Road recorded 'entries and exits' based on the total number of people travelling to or from the station.

Nationally the total number of

estimated entries and exits at Britain's stations between April 2014 and March 2015 reached nearly 2.8 billion, an increase of more than 119 million.

Almost all of the top 10 busiest rail stations were in London, with Waterloo at the top, except Birmingham New Street station which came eighth in the list, with more than 35.3 million entries and exits in the

last year. Walsall was the second busiest Midlands station, with 1.3 million journeys, a rise of 1.6 per cent, followed by Sandwell and Dudley with 831,756 entries and exits, up 5.4 per cent.

Dudley Port recorded 421,370 journeys in the 12 months up until April, a rise of 0.6 per cent, while Cosely, with 411,584 entries and exits, saw a 1.1 per cent increase.

Bigger penalties for drivers using mobiles

Report by David Banner

MOTORISTS caught using a mobile phone while driving are set to face tougher punishments.

Penalty points will rise from three to four and fines will go up 50 per cent to £150 under Government proposals.

But the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) warned that the move would not have a 'dramatic impact' unless there were more traffic police officers to enforce the law.

Under the measures, drivers of larger vehicles such as HGVs would receive six points for being caught on a mobile phone – up from three – because the consequences of an accident can be much more severe.

Drivers can be banned from the road if they receive 12 points within three years.

In 2014 the use of a mobile phone was a contributing factor in 21 fatal accidents and 84 which were classed as serious, according to Department for Transport (DfT) statistics for Britain.

Serious

Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin said: "Using a mobile phone at the wheel is reckless and costs lives – I want to see it become a social taboo like not wearing a seat-belt. We will take action to tackle this persistent problem, with an emphasis on the most serious offenders."

Most people caught for the first time will be given the opportunity to avoid points on their licence by taking an educational course which focuses on the effects of holding a mobile while driving. The IAM's director of policy and research, Neil Greig, praised the Government's desire to improve road safety but claimed harsher punishment for mobile use will not have a significant effect.

He said: "What we need is an increase in traffic police officers who enforce tougher regulations, in which motorists would fear using a mobile phone at the wheel because they'll get caught."

Salon's slap-up festive offerings



Front to back, Brand director Ian Matto, head barber Amy Gough, and owner Lynsey Rush at Jimmy Trims

IT'S the most wonderful time of the year – but for some, it is also the loneliest. So kind-hearted salon owner Lynsey Rush opened her barber shop in Willenhall on Christmas Day to provide food and good cheer.

She was moved to make the offer after losing her mother this year. Lynsey, 36, owner of Jimmy Trims Cult Barber Shop in Wolverhampton Street, said: "This is definitely something mum would have done."

The idea was sparked after a customer told her he would be having beans on toast alone on Christmas Day.

"Not long afterwards, another customer told me he hadn't spoken to anyone on Christmas Day for 20 years," she said. "I couldn't bear to think of them on their own, so I decided to open up the shop and hold

Christmas here." Several Willenhall traders have rallied round and provided food and Prosecco for the festive gathering. Around 12 people so far have said they will be attending. Lynsey, whose mother Julie Rush died aged 54 in June, said: "My mum would have approved. She was always taking people in, sometimes for two or three weeks at a time. This is in her honour."

For health and safety reasons, she will not be able to cook on the premises but promises a buffet table heaving with pork pies, sausage rolls, mince pies and other Yuletide fare. And Lynsey's six-year-old son Joseph will be providing the entertainment. "When I told him what was happening, he was delighted. He wants to come along and do magic tricks for everyone."

Hundreds swap roles in move to save £16m

ALMOST 200 staff have been moved to alternative roles at Sandwell's hospital trust as part of plans to slash more than £16 million from the wage bill.

The organisation, which runs Sandwell Hospital and City Hospital, has been redeploying staff to other positions to help cut costs.

Bosses announced in 2014 that they needed to axe around 1,400 posts over five years to balance the books.

But they have worked to find non-medical staff new roles within the organisation rather than losing those individuals.

The hospital trust has also been working to reduce the amount spent on agency workers, choosing to invest more money in permanent medical staff.

Director of organisation development, Raffaella Goodby said: "We are part way through a five-year change programme, which we have been open about with staff and local residents."

"In the last 15 months nearly 200 staff have been redeployed into new roles, as we look to reduce safely our pay costs, but retain valued employees, many of whom live locally."

"Our plans for 2016, 2017 and 2018 will be confirmed in spring 2016, but we would expect them to be in line with previously published estimates of increased community-based staffing and reduced staffing in back office functions and some hospital functions. The first step in change is always reducing agency costs, and our priority remains quality and safety."

Driver admits danger charge

A MOTORIST from the Black Country has admitted causing the death of a man by dangerous driving, Peter Price, aged 39, from Quinton, was killed when he was hit by a Mercedes driven by Omar Tariq last November.

Tariq, 31, from Denton Road, Stourbridge, was told to prepare for a custodial sentence by judge Kristina Montgomery QC.

He pleaded guilty at Wolverhampton Crown Court on Monday December 21, for causing the death of Mr Price by dangerous driving at Hagley Road West in Sandwell. He also admitted driving without insurance.

Judge Montgomery told Tariq: "You will receive a sentence of immediate custody."

Tariq was disqualified from driving. He will be sentenced on January 25.

Van driver who died in crash is named

A MAN from Walsall who was killed in a crash on the M6 has been named by police as Wajid Mahmood. The 44-year-old was driving a white Mercedes Sprinter van alongside a passenger, yet to be named, who was also killed on December 17.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Bus engine fire drama is probed

PASSENGERS had to be evacuated from a bus after it caught fire in Willenhall. Two fire engines were called to the scene on Bilston Lane around 2.22pm on Tuesday December 22.

Firefighters in breathing apparatus used two hose reel jets to put out the flames in around half an hour.

The blaze started in the engine of the Arriva Midlands vehicle.

Spokesman for the firm, Keith Myatt, said: "We are investigating an incident concerned with one of our buses.

"We had our engineering team out as soon as we were given information about the problem with the vehicle.

"We are working with them and carrying out a thorough investigation into the matter."

All passengers were safely removed before fire crews arrived. West Midlands Police closed off the road at the junction with Birmingham Street while the area was made safe.

Comic Mitch to perform at hall

COMEDIAN and writer Mitch Benn will be performing at Stourbridge Town Hall in April. He regularly features on BBC Radio 4's The Now Show.

Tickets are now on sale for his show Don't Believe A Word on April 26 at 8pm.

Benn also appears on It's Been a Bad Week for BBC Radio 2. Three series of his successful Radio 4 show, Mitch Benn's Crimes Against Music have been broadcast so far. He also presents The Mitch Benn Music Show on BBC Radio 7.

72 homes planned for former car site

MORE than 70 new homes will be built on an industrial estate once home to a major car manufacturer.

Wolverhampton council has revealed plans for 72 homes on the Tower and Fort Works site in Graisleigh. It would see the 3.4 acres of land sold to a development partner for family homes. Proposals to redevelop the site in Pelham Street have been in the pipeline for years. The works were once home to the country's third largest car manufacturer, Clyno, before it moved out during 1927.

Police net 152 cannabis plants

A HUGE haul of cannabis plants has been seized following a morning raid in Walsall. Officers swooped on the property at Kingsley Street in Pleck at 10.12am on Tuesday December 22.

They discovered four rooms full of cannabis plants and removed 152 in total which will all be destroyed.

West Midlands Police's Cannabis Disposal Team posted: "If you live in Kingsley Street #Pleck and are missing four rooms full of #cannabis don't panic. We have it. Merry Xmas!"

Mayhem on roads and at shops in sales rush

TENS of thousands of shoppers stormed the sales at shops over the weekend, with experts saying £3.74 billion was spent nationwide on Boxing Day alone.

Huge queues of traffic snaked out of the Merry Hill Shopping Centre in Brierley Hill on Sunday - with the chaos expected to continue for a few days into the new year.

But the mayhem is good news for the local economy, with Merry Hill bosses revealing this festive period was their busiest to date.

The New Square shopping centre in West Bromwich also experienced its busiest ever December, with an estimated 900,000 visitors.

Centre manager Steve Burr said: "We're delighted to be able to report another record-breaking Christmas for New Square, with exceptional footfall and many of our retailers also reporting their highest ever sales figures."

Mr Burr added: "We've got bigger and better plans for next year, so are looking forward to an even more successful Christmas in 2016!"

Intu, which owns the Merry Hill shopping complex in Brierley Hill, said tens of thousands of shoppers had descended on its stores during the sales rush and causing some disruption to motorists travelling in the vicinity.

"There were queues at a number of our sites and it was an early start for some of our more popular retailers," said Gordon McKinnon, operations director of Intu.

Ellie hits out at free swim move

GOLDEN girl Ellie Simmonds has spoken of her 'disappointment' over Walsall Council's decision to axe free swimming for children.

The Paralympic champion lent her name to the initiative when it was set up seven years ago. She expressed the hope that the authority may bring back the scheme in the future. Around two thirds of adults and more than 20 per cent of 10-year-olds in Walsall are considered seriously overweight.

Council bosses say the scheme is no longer financially viable and, from January 1, a standard fee of £2 is to be brought in for children to swim at borough baths. Ellie, aged 21, said: "Being able to swim is an important life skill and I have always felt that everyone should be able to swim."

Vandals rip up youngsters' trees

Vandals have struck in Bilbrook with 30 trees planted by pupils ripped up. They have been replanted.

The trees, on Jubilee Wood had been planted by Bilbrook Middle School and Stafford College.

Walsall pub gets a festive facelift



Leanne Maholland with Stuart Plant

A PUB in Aldridge has celebrated the completion of a £150,000 facelift.

The Bowman on Myatt Avenue, has been completely refurbished throughout by pub operator Punch.

Everything from the walls to the floors and the fixtures and fittings has been updated. Outside a patio area for customers has also been developed to the rear of the pub.

New owner Leanne Maholland, said: "I've worked in the industry for a number of years and can't believe that I'm actually running my own pub, it's such a great feeling.

"I'm looking forward to getting to know our customers and getting involved in the local community, especially over Christmas and New Year.

"I have lots of plans in place for bringing everyone together with regular activities in the pub and family fun days in the summer months.

"When people come to the Bowman, I want them to feel as if they are coming into my house, where they can relax, enjoy themselves and feel part of the Bowman family. I'd like to thank everyone involved in the transformation of the pub and for supporting me throughout the process."

Becki Hewson, new business development manager for Punch, said: "It is great to see the Bowman being rejuvenated and given a new lease of life. The pub is 50 years old and has seen many changes over the years.

"Leanne has put her heart and soul into the relaunch and I have no doubt that she will make the Bowman great success and the focal point of the local community. I'm looking forward to supporting Leanne as she continues to develop the business going forward."

Bin rounds will take place every fortnight

BINS will be emptied every fortnight across Walsall under changes agreed by the borough council which will save nearly £1 million.

Domestic waste will no longer be collected every week as council bosses said money was being wasted on emptying bins which had 'little or nothing in them' due to an increase in recycling.

The changes, which are due to come into effect from next October, have been made following a consultation process, with residents split over the plans.

Half of 4,000 people surveyed said they favoured the switch to fortnightly collections, with 35 per cent favouring alternative proposals to make the bigger garden waste bins become used for general waste.

Around 600 people were against any change to current bin collections. Residents have also complained that the grey domestic waste bins are likely to be full before they are emptied when the change to fortnightly collections come in. But leader of the council Mike Bird said it was a logical decision with the authority needing to save money and more people recycling.

Savings

Walsall Council is expected to save £920,000 a year as a result of the changes.

Following a meeting of the council's cabinet where the changes were ratified, he said: "We have to find money to produce savings and I think the introduction of our recycling regime, which is one of the best in the country, means people are now saying to me their grey bins now have little residual waste.

"I know from my own bins and from speaking to my constituents that grey bins have little or nothing in them every week."

Large families will be provided with bigger bins to try and ensure rubbish is not overflowing from them by the time collection day comes around. Councillor Bird said: "We will be encouraging people to recycle more and correctly. If people find their grey bin is not adequate they can apply for a larger bin if they fulfil the criteria."

Labour member Councillor Dennis Anson criticised the move but blamed the change on Government cuts to local authorities rather than the Conservative-led council itself.

He said: "It is another cut isn't it. The Government cuts have hit rock bottom now."

You shall go to the biggest ball



Bradley Walsh as Buttons is seen with Hannah Grover as Cinders in the massive production

THE World's Biggest Pantomime, which was held in Birmingham, has been hailed a huge success.

Household names Bradley Walsh and Paul O'Grady led an all star cast in Cinderella at Birmingham's Barclaycard Arena, which finished its run on Christmas Eve.

The Yuletide extravaganza, which also starred CBBC stars Dick and Dom, featured nine performances and there were also 3D special effects, aerial acrobatics,

gospel choirs, Bollywood and street dancers and a visit from Father Christmas.

Ahead of the opening show, producer Jon Conway promised a magical show. He said: "It's fantastic to be able to create a show without the restrictions of the conventional theatres.

Not only have we introduced the largest ever pantomime staging, our cast of performers rival even some of the largest West

End Shows." Walsh, who is most famous for hosting quiz shows The Chase and Wheel of Fortune as well as starring in Coronation Street as Danny Baldwin, played Buttons.

O'Grady, who hit the big time performing as his drag queen alter ego Lily Savage before landing his own prime time chat show, plays the fairy godmother, while CBBC's Dick and Dom will play Prince Charming and Dandini.

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It's been a crazy few months for Cloudy2Clear Windows. The company which specialises in repairing windows which are steamed up, broken or damaged by replacing the panes - not the frames has grown rapidly as homeowners take advantage of their services.

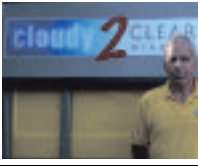
Managing Director Brian Stanley feels that it's all about service. "Our product is simple. If your double glazing is misted up we can replace the glass at a fraction of the cost of a new window, in any type of frame, and with a new 5 year guarantee. But it's not just about saving people

money, although that obviously helps. Many tradespeople have struggled since last year and I honestly feel that during the good times a minority perhaps didn't focus on customer care as much as they should have done.

We make sure we turn up when we say we will, do the job the customer requires and leave their house as clean as a whistle. I often get comments back from customers on how they really didn't expect that sort of service which, in a way, is very sad for the service industry as a whole."

Cloudy2Clear service Wolverhampton and the surrounding

area and Brian is finding that his approach is a major factor in his success. "The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people



I've done work for, which just goes to show how much a little bit of effort is appreciated."

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IN MY VIEW

with Mark Andrews



Apprentice throws up boastful candidates

A REPORT this week claimed 90 per cent of Britain's hospitals were understaffed because they are struggling to recruit enough nurses.

The survey comes a month after David Loughton, chief executive of the Royal Wolverhampton Hospitals NHS Trust, said the biggest threat to the future of the NHS was not a lack of money, but a shortage of suitably trained staff.

In years gone by, the solution would have been in Mr Loughton's hands as in the past, hospitals ran their own training schools where new recruits were taught their skills.

That is now but a memory, after somebody had the bright idea that all new nurses have to go through university before they are deemed ready to perform full nursing duties, with two in three applicants being turned down because there are not enough places.

Presumably, that is what the former Prime Minister meant by education, education, education. A great way to meet a political target of getting 50 per cent of all young people into university, but a lousy way of running a health service.

■■■■

ABOUT a month ago, I took a long weekend in Lanzarote to enjoy a bit of winter sunshine. It was only a three-night stay, but even so, I needed a decent-sized suitcase and a flight bag as well.

So how come the candidates on The Apprentice, who are signing up to 12 weeks living in the same house, each takes with them only a dainty little suitcase – on wheels, of course – to last them the duration of the series?

Despite finding space for the manicure sets and hair straighteners which they all seem to find obligatory, they manage to have all their belongings neatly packed up ready for each time they find themselves in the boardroom. My business plan would be for those special suitcases which are bigger inside than out.

■■■■

BUT wasn't it nice to see The Apprentice won by a lad with a touch of humility, and a desire to learn?

The series has produced its fair share of braggarts and bigmouths over the years. There has been Philip "Pantsman" Taylor who declared himself the Elvis Presley of business, and the ever-loveable Katie Hopkins who has made a career out of spewing her bile on Twitter. This series it was Richard Hill, the David Brent sound-alike who branded himself as "the Swiss army knife of business". Few people would have argued he was a bit of a tool.

And what do all these sneering, leering, "big characters" have in common? Not one of them has won. The moral is, if you want to make boastful, overblown claims on your audition tape, you might indeed win a place in the series. But don't be surprised to be 'fired' once you have served your entertainment value.



Officers at under threat Wolverhampton Central Mosque



Pavlo Lapshyn – mosque bomber



When rioting hit the streets of Wolverhampton

Police chief talks of triumphs and regret

Chris Sims, the region's most senior police officer for eight years, is soon to retire, as ROB GOLLEDGE reports

FOR more than eight years Chris Sims has been a Chief Constable. First at Staffordshire and then West Midlands, he has been one of the country's most senior police officers for 16 years.

"I think people will be surprised how operational it is," the 57-year-old says in his last interview before retiring in a couple of weeks.

"A lot of the authority for deploying tactics sits with the Chief Constable. So I get to be involved with that but at the same time you are running an organisation of 10,000 people and half a billion pounds so it is equally a management task and managing relationships with partners locally, central government other forces, and juggling all of those things.

Obvious

"From my perspective doing that successfully you need to have a clear view of what you want to achieve otherwise you get caught up in the here and now. My view has been if we are not about protecting people what are we here for? All staff and police must put the public first."

Mr Sims' tenure at the top of West Midlands Police – the country's second-largest force – has coincided with a huge programme of budget cuts worth £130 million since 2010 because of government austerity.

Despite the loss of 3,000 police officers and staff, he believes the force is in a strong position, yet, as reported recently, he admits the police can no longer respond to every call in person.

"You can always do more with more people – that is obvious.

"We managed to get in a pattern where we were changing the way we worked quicker than we were losing staff – so we managed



Chief Constable Chris Sims shares his views before retiring in the New Year

with responding to the public and crime, but with the sense that if you do not change faster than you shrink, you have a real problem.

"Terrorism was the only area that was protected financially for obvious reasons. I think we were able to take a lot of the pain of job losses from the areas that were not impacting on the service and protection of the public. I am not sure we could have continued that for another five years of cuts.

"We were in the throws of how we remodel neighbourhood and response policing. That is now for my successor to think through.

"The plan we did for 2020 was certainly a response to austerity but also primarily a response to what is happening in policing.

"The change programme is as much about addressing those issues as it is cutting budgets. We need to carry on the change programme."

Mr Sims left Oxford University in 1980 with

a degree in modern history before joining the Metropolitan Police in London.

Having risen through the ranks he transferred to Staffordshire Police as a Superintendent in 1994 and was promoted to Assistant Chief Constable of West Midlands Police four years later.

In 2003 he became Deputy Chief Constable and, following a stint as Director of Policing Policy at the National Policing Improvement Agency, became Chief Constable of Staffordshire Police in 2007.

He returned to the West Midlands in June 2009 as Chief Constable.

He was awarded an OBE in 2003 and Queen's Police Medal in 2010.

He says one regret is that more has not been done to merge police forces or for them to work closer.

He says Britain's current 43 forces model is

not sustainable, adding: "Having been Chief Constable in Staffordshire and then at West Midlands, I hoped we would be further down the track with the work we do with other regional forces.

"We still run the motorway policing and more serious organised crime work together, but if you asked me six or seven years ago, I would have thought there would be more convergence."

"I think policing in the wider West Midlands region would be stronger if we worked together."

Mr Sims said the proudest moment in his career came with swiftly restoring order following the 2010 riots, and the investigation into racist killer and mosque bomber Pavlo Lapshyn who struck in Walsall, West Bromwich and Wolverhampton in 2013.

Lapshyn was caught in 2013 following a painstaking inquiry that saw detectives trawl tens of thousands of hours of CCTV to piece together the Ukrainian student's movements and link him to the three bomb blasts.

Diverse

Mr Sims said "That investigation embodied all that is good about West Midlands Police: standing shoulder-to-shoulder with our diverse communities, fantastic detective work, and good old fashioned neighbourhood policing with officers knocking on doors until they came across Lapshyn's place of work."

He now plans a brief hiatus before aiming to return to policing in a senior leadership role nationally in the New Year.

He added: "I will miss the people and being at the heart of the big issues that affect people's lives in the West Midlands and hopefully influencing in a positive way.

"I intend to recharge the batteries because as Chief Constable you never really switch off; I'm looking forward to that but don't want to be away from policing for too long.

Police and Crime Commissioner David Jamieson described Mr Sims as 'an outstanding public servant' who has 'devoted his life to protecting the security and safety of the public'.

He added: "Chris Sims has served the West Midlands with distinction and given over 30 years of devoted service as an officer."



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Make a resolution to help others

AT this time of year we like to look forward to making resolutions for the year ahead. Most of us can plan ahead with relative confidence, but I'd like to ask your readers to think about those for whom the future might be a cause of nothing but worry.

Millions of people in the UK are disabled or care for a disabled loved one. In many cases they are bound together 24/7 through the need to give and receive care and are reliant on the support of others to have even the most basic quality of life. I work for Revitalise, a wonderful charity that provides

much-needed respite holidays for disabled people and carers. We did some research and found out that eight out of ten are fearful about what the future holds for them.

They told us they were concerned about not getting the support they need from social services, worried about diminishing opportunities to take time off and fearful of ending up isolated and alone. To find out how to support us, visit www.revitalise.org.uk or call 0303 303 0147.

COLIN BROOK
Revitalise

Joy over Gala Baths

IT was pleasing to read in the Express & Star recently that the £1 million refurbishment of the Gala Baths in Walsall was due to start.

Back in 2013 the Gala Baths was under threat of possible closure but at the September 23, 2013, council meeting, myself and Councillor Paul Bott (Independent, Darlaston South) moved a resolution.

It said: "That this council calls for a further report to cabinet and council consideration, using a cost/benefit analysis approach as to how this council at a relatively modest investment cost (of around £1m) might ensure a further 10 year lease of life for this facility by remodeling the brine pool and therefore making it likely for user numbers to rise."

Our proposal was carried unanimously by council members. Now, just over two years later, the work is due to begin that will give the Gala Baths the much needed and welcomed refurbishment and a further 'lease of life'.

CLLR PETE SMITH
Blakenall Ward

Bar opening is welcomed

THE opening of Slaters Bar in the former Costa Coffee premises in Queen Square is very good news for real ale drinkers in Wolverhampton.

Slaters have an excellent reputation but their beers have not always been readily available locally.

At one time I believe Wolverhampton lagged behind some of its Black Country neighbours in terms of the real ales available.

But I think that Kay Slater's obvious enthusiasm for the firm's new investment indicated the times are changing.

J ROWLEY
Wolverhampton

Gazza is no racist, just a joker

WITH regard to the 'Gazza hate crime' headline in the E&S December 14.

As a member of the audience that evening at the Civic Hall during the 'Gazza' show, I cannot believe that this frivolous 'throwaway' remark from Gascoigne could be taken seriously!

There was never any racial or so called 'hate' overtones in its delivery. Yes the remark was aimed at the black security guard standing in the shadows, on the side-wings of the stage, it was delivered with humorous friendly banter, as was the whole show!

Gascoigne has rubbed shoulders with black players throughout his career as a footballer, he has black friends. This nation is now full of so called Politically Correct Numpties who jump on the racial bandwagon at the slightest inno-

cent remark.

As for Gascoigne I don't think he has a racial bone in his body. On reflection of that night and the gags that were cracked about Baggies' supporters, people from Tip-ton, the Irish, Scousers etc, then if there was malicious intent, there would be a massive queue right around Wolverhampton and up the Stafford Road to the M6.

M ADDISON
Wolverhampton

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST

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EMAIL

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expressandstar.co.uk](mailto:walsall.chron@expressandstar.co.uk)

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

Simple principle on Brits' entitlements

T Finn (letter 15 December 15) asks whether British workers taking jobs elsewhere in the European Union are entitled to benefits immediately. If citizens of the country have that entitlement, the answer is yes.

The principle is utterly simple. A citizen of EU country A who goes to work in EU country B must be treated in exactly the same way as a citizen of country B. When I was a lecturer in a British university, my colleagues Professor Iossa and Dr Koufopoulos were entitled to the same benefits as me. If I had moved to the university of Naples or Athens, I would have been entitled to the same benefits as an Italian or Greek academic in the same institution.

If one of the workers being made redundant from Goodyear obtained alternative employment with Pirelli in an Italian plant, he or she would quite properly be entitled to the same remuneration and benefits as an Italian colleague.

With regard to health care, the same even applies to temporary visitors: an EHIC card entitles a French visitor to Britain to receive treatment from the NHS on the same terms as a British citizen and a British holidaymaker in France to be treated as a French person would be.

David Cameron seems to have made a major miscalculation in his anxiety to be seen to be "doing something" about immigration. In-work benefits to EU nationals are an insignificant part of Britain's budget, but a red rag to precisely those central European countries which only a few years ago were welcomed into the EU. It takes spectacular incompetence for a Tory prime minister to alienate the right-wing red baiting governments of Poland and Hungary!

A HARRISON
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9.30am, 11.30am, 3.30pm, 5.30pm & 7.30pm
Darlaston Sports & Social Club,
16 The Leys
Lesley 07545 263348</p> <p>WEST BROMWICH
9.30am, 3.30pm, 5.30pm & 7.30pm
West Bromwich Leisure Centre,
Moor Street
Pippa 07816 900149</p> <p>BRADLEY
9.30am & 7pm
St Martins Church,
Slater Street
Jodie 07547 771319</p> <p>BENTLEY
3pm, 5pm & 7pm
St Andrews Church Hall,
Wolverhampton Road
Liz 01902 351280</p> | <p>ESSINGTON
5pm & 7pm
St John's Church Hall,
Hall Street
Gill 07929 346145</p> <p>STREETLY
9.30am, 11.30am, 5.30pm & 7pm
Veseyan sports & social Club
Little Hardwick Rd,
Tracy 07843 097326</p> <p>WALSALL
7.30pm
St Martin's Church Hall
Daffodil Road (Off Sutton Road)
Karen 07508 943374</p> <p>BLOXWICH
9.30am, 11.30am, 5.30pm & 7.30pm
All Saints Parish Church Hall
Elmore Row
Vicky 07894 277072</p> <p>WEDNESDAY
WILLENHALL
3pm, 5pm & 7pm
Victory Club,
Lichfield Road, New Invention
Gill 07929 346145</p> <p>WALSALL
5.30pm & 7.30pm
Walsall College The Hub,
Littlton Street West
Kirsty 07584 090762</p> | <p>WALSALL
7pm
St Gabriells Church
Walstead Road
Debbie 07983 424551</p> <p>WILLENHALL
9.30am, 5pm & 7pm
Willenhall Chart Centre,
19 Corner Street
Liz 01902 351280</p> <p>PELSALL
9am, 11am, 5.30pm & 7.30pm
Pelsall Village Centre
High Street
Karen 07508 943374</p> <p>THURSDAY
NEW GROUP OPENS 7th JANUARY
RUSHALL
9.30am
Rushall Labour Club
Lichfield Road
Sue 07976 371771</p> <p>COALPOOL
5.30pm & 7.30pm
Coalpool Methodist Church
Coalpool Lane
Lynne 07955 685196</p> <p>BILSTON
7pm
Bilston Baptist Church
Prouds Lane
Audrey 07500 057769</p> | <p>PELSALL
5.30pm & 7.30pm
St Michaels Church Hall
(on Pelsall Common), Church
Road
Sue 07976 371771</p> <p>WALSALL
5.30pm & 7.30pm
St John's Church
Scarborough Road
Aileen 07983 711056</p> <p>FRIDAY
COALPOOL
9.30am
Coalpool Methodist Church
Coalpool Lane
Lynne 07955 685196</p> <p>ALDRIDGE
9.30am
St Thomas Church
St Thomas Close
Georgie 07947 271375</p> <p>SATURDAY
ALDRIDGE
9.30am
St Thomas Church
St Thomas Close
Georgie 07947 271375</p> <p>LITTLE BLOXWICH
8.30am
The Holy Ascension Church
Sanstone Road
Lizz 07738 239226</p> |
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33 jobs go as axe falls on last Caparo business

THE axe has fallen on the last part of the once-mighty Caparo engineering empire – with 33 workers losing their jobs at a steel rolling mill in Willenhall.

Ductile Stourbridge, in Charles Street, was the last business from the group remaining in administration following the collapse of Caparo Industries in October.

The news was broken to staff by administrators from Pricewaterhouse-Coopers after last-ditch attempts to find a buyer failed.

One Ductile worker, who asked not to be named, said: "It wasn't a surprise. It was more dragged out than anything."

He said workers had also been told about the unsuccessful late night bid to find a buyer.

Saved

The writing had been on the wall for Ductile after it was left out of a rescue of most of Caparo by Liberty House group, owned by the Gupta family. More than 600 jobs were saved at firms including Ductile's sister steel strip businesses JB&S Lees and Firth Cleveland, both based at the Trident Works in West Bromwich.

But Ductile Stourbridge was left unwanted and unsold as the PwC administrators renewed their efforts to find a buyer. Time ran out, and the administration team had to break the news to the workers.

It means nearly 500 workers have lost their jobs in the Caparo collapse, but more than 1,100 jobs have been saved.

While 33 workers lost their jobs immediately, four more were being kept on temporarily to wind down the factory. Matthew Hammond, PwC partner and lead administrator said:



Ductile Stourbridge steel rolling mill in Willenhall

"After saving a total of 1,111 jobs at Caparo, it is with regret that we have made these decisions."

"Despite sustained efforts to find a solution, it was not possible to find a buyer. Without a buyer or the ability to continue to trade economically, we were forced to take the difficult

decision to close the unit with immediate effect. We thank those former members of staff for their service to CIP; we will work closely with them, their representatives and agencies to provide support and ensure that their redundancy and other claims are handled efficiently at this difficult time."

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Wonder-ful new album

STOURBRIDGE indie rockers The Wonder Stuff are to release a new album to mark 30 years in the music industry. The album 30 Goes Around the Sun is currently being recorded at Mockingbird Studios in Stourbridge. It will be the eighth studio album from the band led by Miles Hunt. The album is available in CD, vinyl and digital format and can be pre-ordered at www.pledgemusic.com. The release is planned to tie in with 30th anniversary concert at the O2 Academy, Birmingham on March 19, supported by The Wedding Present.

Increase in hot liquid attacks, say police

ATTACKS involving boiling water, cigarettes and acid in the West Midlands have risen in the past four years.

Figures released by West Midlands Police showed that attacks from the use of boiling liquids and corrosive substances had increased since 2012.

In 2012, 13 were recorded, compared to 23 in 2015.

West Midlands Police said acid attacks, which often leave victims horrifically scarred or disfigured, were 'unacceptable' but stressed such incidents were rare.

Force spokesman Peter Edney said: "It's reassuring to see that these numbers remain low and the figures show that there has been only one actual acid attack in the last 12 months.

"Clearly these kinds of attacks are completely unacceptable and if we receive any reports of this we will look to identify and prosecute the offenders."

Flammable

There were four recorded acid attacks between 2012 and 2015. One man also had corrosive liquid thrown at them last year.

Another woman was doused in flammable liquid and a man had bleach thrown at him.

Attacks using boiling liquids, including water and hot drinks, were also recorded. In total there were 83 attacks between 2012 and 2015 which involved what was believed to be a corrosive substance.

In July, shopkeeper Mohammed Tariq had acid thrown in his face when he was behind the counter in Lifestyle Express in Tividale before being slashed in the face with a knife in a terri-

Driver in lucky escape after car ends up on roof

A DRIVER survived a horror smash in Birmingham which saw his vehicle land on its roof after hitting two parked cars. The crash happened on The Radleys in Kitts Green, Birmingham, at about 7.55am on Sunday, December 20.

The driver of a silver Vauxhall suffered just a graze to the back of his head following the crash. He was taken to Heartlands Hospital as a precaution. Another car, a red Volkswagen, was left against a garden wall with severe front damage.

A West Midlands Ambulance Service spokesman Murray McGregor said: "When crews arrived they found a number of people including a nurse looking



The scene of the crash

after the driver of the silver Vauxhall.

"That car and a red Volkswagen had both suffered very significant damage. The Vauxhall had ended up against a Ford Ka, which was also damaged. Despite this, the driver was relatively uninjured. He was somewhat disorientated and had a graze to the back of his head but otherwise appeared uninjured."

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10 Tasters raise glass to pub success



From left, Nathan Ellis, John Burton, Brent Burton, Pete Hill and Malcolm Maynard toast their achievement

A GROUP of Black Country ale enthusiasts have now visited all 2,000 pubs in the West Midlands – and their 18,500th in total.

Black Country Ale Tasters finished their final round at the Wellington pub in Birmingham on November 20.

They raised more than £3,000 in the process and donated it all to Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust.

The group have toured pubs in Britain and Europe for the last three decades. Member Peter Hill, aged 59 from West Bromwich, described his delight at the achievement.

He said: “I was over the moon. We finished at a nice pub, with a nice drink and met some great people from the hospital.”

The group presented a cheque for £3,205. The money will fund equipment for children.

The ale tasters completed all the pubs in the Black Country in 1990. But since they have had to visit 200

new pubs to complete the whole of the West Midlands. They have already drunk at every pub in Wales.

Mr Hill has been a core member of the group since its inception in 1984, along with his father Joe, who passed away last year. He keeps a record of all his visits.

He has set his sights on finishing the whole Midlands region – Nottinghamshire is the only county left – and also wants to drink in all the micro-pubs in Britain.

Wrangle over bid for more pupils at ‘good’ school

OFSTED inspectors have turned down a request from a ‘good’ school to take on extra pupils – in favour of a school placed into special measures.

The borough council is considering introducing a new entry form at troubled Kings Hill Primary in Darlaston even though it was graded as ‘adequate’ in 2013 and has failed to improve substantially since.

However, the authority refused an application to expand from Old Church Primary nearby. Darlaston South Labour Councillor Doug James branded the idea ‘bonkers’.

He said: “The decision to reject ‘good’ schools’ requests for more school places, despite huge local demand, devalues the work of headteachers, teachers, and ignores parents’ aspirations for their children.

“Walsall Council have ignored both the local and national policy where education authorities are asked to raise standards and, have more young people given the opportunity to attend ‘good’ schools.”

He confirmed parents at Old Church had launched a petition urging the rethink.

He said 300 people had signed it so far but they were aiming for 1,500 to force a full council debate on the matter.

Councillor Christopher Towse, responsible for schools, said: “Walsall Council operates a robust annual process to assess and predict the need for school places.

“The proposal to enlarge Kings Hill School is subject to an ongoing consultation process, the outcome of which will be reported to cabinet who will then make the final decision on the expansion proposal.”

Deputy councillor leader Adrian Andrew, added: “There is a finite budget allocated by the DfE with which the council needs to meet its statutory requirements while ensuring it gets best value for money.”

Colleagues die in crash on M-way

TWO men who died in a crash on the M6 in Warwickshire the week before Christmas are believed to have worked for a Walsall firm.

The men were travelling in a van which was involved in a smash with a lorry at around 5.30am on Thursday, December 17.

Inspector Julian Smith, from Warwickshire Police, which is investigating the accident, said: “We know that they worked for a local company, we believe in the Walsall area.

Deliveries

“They left in the early hours and they were off to make some deliveries prior to being involved in this collision.”

The crash happened between J1 of the M6 for Coventry and J1 for Rugby.

The lorry driver was shaken but uninjured. Two lanes of the southbound carriageway were shut, with traffic tailing back to the M6 Toll.



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Punch-up and drugs leads to closure of bar

A BAR has shut down after a serious punch-up spiralled outside and was followed by drug taking and smoking indoors – all after the legal hours of trading.

Malones Bar, in Bilston, has had its licence suspended by Wolverhampton Council after an application by police. A full hearing will take place this month. The disorder at the bar in Lichfield Street came to the attention of police after a man was attacked inside after trading hours. He was then set upon by the offender and several others outside, before they returned inside.

Officers viewed CCTV footage which showed the offender return to the bar and take drugs with other people.

Footage also showed ashtrays on every table, with around 50 people inside at the time of the attack.

At a licensing hearing, councillors heard about the trouble from police, who made an application for the suspension.

They were told that the drug taking would have been clearly visible to premises holder Tony Mandani and his brother Moe, who were behind the bar.

Pe Mitch Harvey also revealed finding two drink lists, one which doubled in price after midnight, when the bar's licence to serve ended.

He said: "It is abhorrent behaviour to leave someone lying in the street badly injured and allow the culprits back in to partake in drug dealing and after-hours trading."

Assist

"The CCTV footage clearly shows a number of people chopping up what I can only assume is a class A drug and sharing it between them, all of which went unchallenged under the watchful eye of Tony and his brother."

Designated premises supervisor (DPS) Garfield McDonald, who was not present at the time of the incident, on November 7, resigned his position days after being questioned by police in early December.

There is currently no DPS for Malones Bar and Mr Mandini had hired his brother, Moe, to 'help' run it with him. Police served Moe Mandini with illegal working papers and he is now facing deportation.

Tony Mandini said he was shocked by the decision and stressed that on the night concerned, he had been asked to keep the bar open for a private party, but had failed to apply for a temporary event notice.

He said: "Ashtrays were on all the tables because we wanted to keep our customers



Malones Bar licence has been suspended

inside the bar. I admit we should not have been open at that hour but I was asked to stay open as a favour for a friend, who wanted to hold a private party.

"I don't condone any drug taking of any nature and for this to happen in the bar was a one-off."

"My brother was helping me run the place, he was not receiving any payment for working there. I know the police are doing their jobs but I'm shocked by this decision. Fights happen all the time in pubs but this was an isolated incident at Malones."

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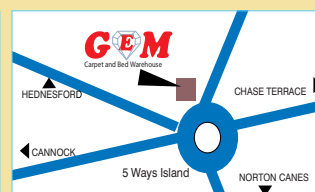
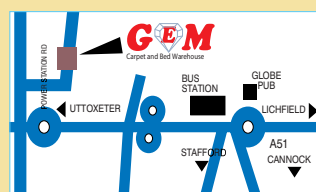
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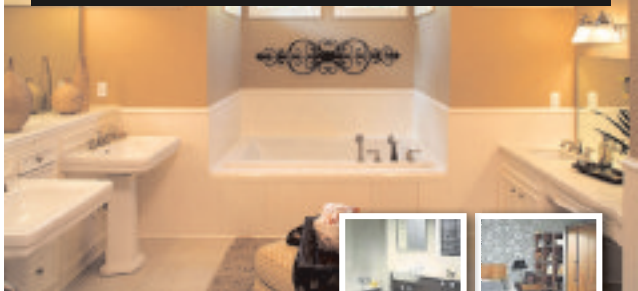
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Boxes of figures and memorabilia in Antony's Star Wars room



The avid collector with his partner Helen Cox and some more figurines



Antony shows off some more of his purchases, which have totalled £100,000



Antony's amazing collection which stretches back to his childhood



A model of one of the good guys, a rebel trooper, in its packaging

Force is with Antony

WITH the advent of the new Star Wars film in the cinemas, plenty of fanatics are already out in force to show their enthusiasm for the film phenomenon.

But one Brummie postman may have trumped the lot as he reveals his collection of memorabilia, which he has spent more than £100,000 on.

Antony Blunt, aged 38, has been collecting for some 20 years and has a treasure trove of Star Wars memorabilia ranging from imperial shut-

tles to custom-made rebel troopers. He is such an enthusiast in fact that he has a room dedicated to his favourite franchise, which is stuffed full of figurines and models from a galaxy far far away.

Despite adding to his collection every weekend and having no plans of stopping, this is the first time that Antony has shown his collection off.

He said: "I have spent over a hundred thousand on my collection, it's one of my passions."

"I have been collecting since the mid-1990s, but have had some of the toys since the 1980s, so it goes a very long way back for me. It's really been over the past 20 years though that my collection has really grown, but I have some re-

ally great pieces because of it. The most expensive piece that I have is a model A-Wing fighter, which cost me £400. Every Friday I will sit down and get on the internet auctions sites to get new collectables. I have a rule where I have to buy at least one thing every Friday."

While most people might not have the patience to put up with Antony's obsession, which has cost as much as £400 for one item, partner Helen Cox, 43, has managed to find a way to exist alongside the collection.

She said: "I do get a bit confused by the details that Antony goes to with his collecting, but I do find Star Wars quite interesting."



Antony with a model of Darth Vader's Imperial Shuttle from The Empire Strikes Back

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Playground provides gift for youngsters



Children with Councillor Bob Piper, Smethwick Town lead member, Councillor Richard Marshall, Mark Brookes, from Heritage Building and Conservation Ltd and Julia Morris, Sandwell Council

CHRISTMAS came early for children in Sandwell thanks to a new £100,000 play area in Lightwoods Park – with a host of equipment.

Schoolchildren from Abbey Junior School, local councillors, council parks officers and representatives from Heritage Building and Conservation Ltd attended the launch.

Deputy council leader Councillor Steve Eling said: "We are looking forward to the completion of the house

and park next year which will bring both back to their former glory."

It is the first part of the Lightwoods House and Park restoration that has been completed and has been installed by Blakedown Landscapes, a sub-contractor to the main contractor Heritage Building and Conservation Ltd.

Lightwoods House and Park is currently undergoing a £5 million restoration project funded through Sandwell Council, the Heritage Lottery Fund

and Big Lottery Fund, under the Parks for People scheme. Once completed, the once-derelict Grade II listed Lightwoods House will have a café, office accommodation, gallery and grand room that will host weddings and other functions.

The project will also see the creation of a new pond, the restoration of two drinking fountains and the bandstand, new pathways and a complete restoration of the Shakespeare Gardens.

Immigrant at large for six years over faked documents

Work progressing on new council houses



From left, Councillors Paul Moore and Pat Davies and Tom Watson MP

WORK is under way on the building of much needed council homes in West Bromwich on the site of a former infant and junior school.

Kier Living is building the £3.25 million development of 29 houses – a mix of two, three and four-bedroom homes – at Kent Close for Sandwell Council.

Councillor Paul Moore, cabinet member for regeneration and economic investment, was showing West Bromwich East MP Tom Watson, and Councillor Pat Davies, ward member for Hateley Heath, how well the build is progressing.

Councillor Moore said: "I am extremely impressed with the progress that's been made on the site since work started in September."

The homes are the first council houses to be built in Sandwell since 2012 and will be rented and managed by the council.

The whole development is set to be completed by August 2016.

Councillor Moore said the development was also providing four apprenticeship opportunities for local young people in bricklaying, and painting and decorating.

Mr Watson said: "These much needed affordable homes will give local families a good start on the housing ladder."

David Margerison, site manager at Kent Close for Kier Living, said: "Kier is absolutely delighted to be contributing towards this regeneration project."

AN Iraqi immigrant was at large for six years after trying to open a bank account using fake identity documents, a court heard.

Shakhawan Ahmed fled to Norfolk in 2009 having been caught out at a TSB branch in Bridge Street Walsall.

He feared he would be repatriated to his war-torn home nation and was trying to open the bank account so he could obtain work and stay living in the UK.

Prosecutor Ian Windridge told Wolverhampton Crown Court that Ahmed was caught on June 22, 2009. He said: "He handed over a UK driving licence in the name of Ali Hamed Karim but with his photograph on the card. He also handed over what appeared to be an official residence permit, bearing the same details.

"The bank worker considered the documents but didn't feel they were legitimate.

"He checked them using an ultra violet system. There should have been a watermark on the driver's licence but there wasn't and the paper for the permit was on gloss rather than matte paper.

"Police were called and both documents were officially checked, and there was no record of Ali Hamed Karim."

Station

At interview, Ahmed, aged 42, of Kingsley Street, Walsall, told police that he had bought the documents from someone for £300 and picked them up at Birmingham New Street station.

He appeared before the magistrates court in 2009 and a date was set for it to be heard at crown court but he didn't attend. He remained at large until November this year.

He submitted a guilty plea and accepted his failure to appear.

Ahmed admitted to making false representations by producing a fake driving licence and residence permit and breaching bail. He was jailed for eight months.

Defence barrister Oliver Woolhouse, told judge Kristina Montgomery QC: "He has been here for 15 years. He had a work permit in 2004 but lost it two years later.

"He has had to work in car washes to try and scrape money together.

"He is from a war-torn country, and was worried that he would be repatriated after his case went to court.

"He found himself in a very difficult position, and took to extreme measures.

"He is a man of intelligence, but finds himself in a difficult situation."

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LET'S make it clear – flooding in Cumbria and the beautiful Lake District has been devastating.

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But... the doors are still open to visitors with as warm a welcome as you would have received in the days before the waters rose. So why not get away and show people your support by taking a break?

The area has much to offer from self-catering in pretty cottages to bed and breakfasts, pubs and hotels. A perfect spot for a break is next to Lake Windermere – a place I fell in love with many years ago as a child when reading Arthur Ransome's Swallows and Amazons adventures.

I spent some lovely time in the area including my own week-long adventure at

TRAVEL
By Sharon Walters

the age of 17 doing the expedition element of the Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award. Camping and walking in the glorious Lakes with a band of schoolfriends. Now of more mature years I no longer enjoy the call of canvas for a break but instead prefer a little more luxury. An ideal spot for that is alongside Windermere at the Waterhead Hotel.

The Waterhead is a four star boutique/town house hotel offering stylish sophistication and contemporary luxury. Outside it looks like a traditional stone country house hotel but inside be prepared for exactly the opposite. It combines traditional Lakeland elegance in its simply stunning setting with modern comfort.

And if you like to take your dog along, there are a number of dog-friendly bed-

rooms where your pooch is welcomed with their own bed, doggie treats and food and water dishes. Well behaved dogs are allowed in most public areas within the hotel except the Grill restaurant.

But you can eat in the bar with your four-legged friend tucked away under the table, as my terrier Jack did while we ate breakfast.

Relaxing

The bar is a lovely place to enjoy a relaxing drink and if the weather is good, the terrace and garden have great views across the lake. Of special note is the exotic gin and tonic menu with a Spanish and Mediterranean influence blended with local brands such as Bedrock Gin and Langtons. The restaurant menu champions local ingredients with a modern twist on popular regional dishes. We enjoyed a fantastic meal in the bright and yet relaxed environment while

Jack snoozed upstairs in the bedroom after a long walk! On the shores of Lake Windermere and a pleasant half mile walk from Ambleside, the hotel is ideally located for exploring the Lakes – walking the fells, taking a cruise on Windermere or simply visiting the many local attractions in Ambleside and nearby towns and villages.

As a guest, and if you can tear yourself away from the scenery, you also get full complimentary membership of the Waterhead's sister hotel's leisure complex Low Wood Leisure Club just a mile away.

One evening we visited another sister hotel for dinner, The Wild Boar – this hotel takes its name from the local legend of Sir Richard de Gilpin who fought and killed a ferocious wild boar close by. However its fame these days has more to do with the warmest of welcomes and service.

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City gallery plays host to New Art exhibition

FROM a glacial lake in Iceland to an abstract self-portrait, a wide range of art will be on display at exhibitions in the West Midlands in the coming months.

The four New Art West Midlands exhibitions will open in stages through spring 2016, beginning on February 12 at Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, followed by Wolverhampton Art Gallery later in the year.

Visitors can expect a mixture of painting, photography, sculpture, video and installation.

The artists selected to be part of New Art West Midlands 2016 were chosen by a panel of leading figures in the art world, including artist and academic Sonia Boyce, artist John Stezaker and Katharine Stout, Head of Programme at ICA, London.

Exciting

Mac Birmingham will be joining Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, Wolverhampton Art Gallery and the Herbert Gallery & Museum, Coventry, in hosting the exhibitions.

Wendy Law, director of Turning Point West Midlands, said: "It is exciting to see just how much New Art West Midlands has grown over the last four years and to be working again with our partners.

"There is a diverse range of talent and work coming out of our art schools and universities in the West Midlands.

"New Art West Midlands provides an important opportunity at a crucial point in the careers of these artists, enabling them to have their work displayed in highly respected galleries and to be seen and enjoyed by a wide public."

The annual exhibitions are designed to give upcoming artists a career boost



Self-portrait by Rosa Denby



Artwork by Nicola Onions



Jakki Carey's work called Is, which warns of climate change

and showcase their work. Five artists will win a cash prize of £1,000.

Among the highlights is Jakki Carey's piece called Is, showing a glacial lake in Iceland which she says offers a direct warning from nature about climate change. And by manipulating oil paint, scratching and removing it from the surface of the canvas, Rosa Denby has created a series of self-portraits

reminiscent of Pauline Boty's Pop Art paintings that express feelings of multiple anxieties.

Birmingham City University graduate Matt Parker's audio-visual installation, The Imitation Archive, will be exhibited across all four venues.

New Art West Midlands 2015 is supported with funding from the National Lottery by Arts Council England.

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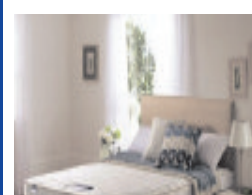
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LONDON THEATRE



BBC 1



Julie Andrews, The Sound of Music, on at 1.15pm

6.00 Breakfast Round-up of national and international news, plus the latest from the money markets. **9.00 FILM: Turbo (2013)** Premiere. Animated adventure, with the voice of Ryan Reynolds. **★ ★ ★ 10.25 FILM: Monsters vs Aliens (2009)** Animated sci-fi comedy, with the voice of Reese Witherspoon. **★ ★ ★ 11.55 Top of the Pops New Year With KDA, Tinie Tempah and Katy B, the Vaccines and Sigala.** **12.55 The Archbishop of Canterbury's New Year Message** The Most Rev Justin Welby delivers his New Year address. **1.00 BBC News at One; Weather 1.10 Midlands Today; Weather 1.15 FILM: The Sound of Music (1965)** Rodgers and Hammerstein musical, starring Julie Andrews. **★ ★ ★ ★**

BBC 2



The Many Faces of Ronnie Corbett, on at 8.30pm

6.35 FILM: Sinbad: Legend of the Seven Seas (2003) Animated adventure, with the voice of Brad Pitt. **★ ★ ★ 7.50 Natural World: Honey Badgers - Masters of Mayhem (R) 8.50 FILM: Viva Las Vegas (1964)** Musical, starring Elvis Presley. **★ ★ ★ 10.15 Darcey's Ballet Heroes** Darcey Bussell considers the dancers who transformed male ballet. (R) **11.15 New Year's Day Vienna Concert 2016 12.45 FILM: Little Women (1994)** Period drama, starring Winona Ryder. **★ ★ ★ 2.40 FILM: The Eagle Has Landed (1976)** A Nazi agent plans to kidnap Churchill as the prime minister spends the weekend in a Norfolk village. **Wartime** - adventure, starring Michael Caine. **★ ★ ★**

ITV



Gino's Italian Escape - Islands in the Sun, on at 8.00pm

6.00 CITV: Dino Dan. (R) **6.10 Dino Dan (R) 6.25 Sooty (R) 6.40 Super 4 (R) 7.00 Mr Bean: The Animated Series (R) 7.15 Mr Bean: The Animated Series (R) 7.30 Mr Bean: The Animated Series (R) 7.45 Mr Bean: The Animated Series (R) 8.00 Oddbods (R) 8.05 A Grizzly New Year Tale (R) 8.35 Almost Naked Animals (R) 8.50 Almost Naked Animals (R) 9.10 Horrid Henry (R) 9.25 Dickinson's Real Deal (R) 10.30 Judge Rinder (R) 11.30 Who's Doing the Dishes? (R) 12.25 Celebrity Squares With Sarah Millican, Ana Matronic, Joe Lycett and Tess Daly. (R) **1.10 ITV Lunchtime News; Weather. 1.25 FILM: Dr No (1962)** James Bond spy thriller, starring Sean Connery. **★ ★ ★****

Ch4



Matthew Broderick stars, Inspector Gadget, on at 11.15pm

7.30 The Big Bang Theory The gang celebrates Star Wars Day. (R) **7.55 The Big Bang Theory Penny gets fired from the movie. (R) 8.20 FILM: Planet 51 (2009)** An astronaut travels to another world where the alien inhabitants believe him to be the scout for a planned invasion. Animated sci-fi comedy, with the voice of Dwayne Johnson. **★ ★ ★ 10.10 The Simpsons (R) 10.40 The Simpsons Lisa accepts an invitation to join a Wiccan coven. (R) 11.15 FILM: Inspector Gadget (1999)** Disney comedy adventure, starring Matthew Broderick. **★ 12.55 Channel 4 Racing** Nick Luck presents live coverage of six races. From Cheltenham, races start at 1.20, 1.55, 2.30 and 3.05. From Musselburgh, at 1.35 and 2.10.

Ch5



Entertaining famous faces, An Audience with Ken Dodd, on at 9.00pm

6.00 Milkshake! 9.35 FILM: Thomas & Friends: Sodor's Legend of the Lost Treasure (2015) Premiere. Animated adventure, featuring the voice of Joseph May. **★ ★ ★ 10.50 FILM: Carry On Cabby (1963)** The neglected wife of a workaholic taxi owner secretly launches a rival cab firm using women drivers to tempt customers away from him. Comedy, starring Sid James. (b/w) **★ ★ ★ 12.35 FILM: Harry and the Hendersons (1987)** A family's holiday in the mountains is thrown into turmoil by an encounter with the legendary Bigfoot, whom they end up taking home. Comedy, with John Lithgow. **★ ★ 2.45 FILM: Dracula: Dead and Loving It (1995)** With Leslie Nielsen. **★**

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Early View

Prime Time

Late View

New Year's Day

4.05 Shaun the Sheep: The Farmer's Llamas (R)

4.30 Wreck-It Ralph (2012) Premiere. Animated adventure, with the voice of John C Reilly and Sarah Silverman. **★ ★ ★**

6.05 BBC News

6.20 Midlands Today; Weather

6.30 EastEnders Mick and Linda's wedding day arrives.

7.00 Billionaire Boy Len Spud and his 12-year-old son Joe become billionaires when Len invents a new toilet roll. However, the money fails to bring them happiness. John Thomson stars.

8.00 EastEnders With Dean now outed as the black sheep of the family, he continues his revenge plot against the Carters.

8.30 Dickensian Compeyson goes to desperate lengths to make Miss Havisham notice him, and Martha Cratchit's wedding plans are thrown into turmoil by an unexpected knock at the door.

9.00 Sherlock The apparent ghost of a woman who took her own life provides the streets of London with an unspeakable thirst for revenge, forcing Holmes to use all his cunning to defeat her.

10.30 Mrs Brown's Boys New Year Special A handsome stranger reveals he only has eyes for one special woman - Agnes Brown. The second of two festive instalments of the comedy, written by and starring Brendan O'Carroll.

11.10 BBC News; Weather.

11.25 Midlands Today; Weather; National Lottery Update

11.35 Adele at the BBC The singer-songwriter chats to Graham Norton about life and career, and is accompanied by her band on classic tracks and songs from her album 25. (R)

12.50 Weather for the Week Ahead 12.55 BBC News

4.50 Gorilla Family and Me Part two of two. Gordon Buchanan revisits the apes. (R)

5.50 The Archbishop of Canterbury's New Year Message The Most Rev Justin Welby delivers his New Year address. (R)

5.55 The Terminal (2004) Comedy, starring Tom Hanks and Catherine Zeta-Jones. **★ ★ ★**

8.00 Christmas University Challenge 2015 Two teams of distinguished graduates compete on behalf of their former universities in the final of the festive edition of the quiz. Jeremy Paxman hosts. Last in the series.

8.30 The Many Faces of Ronnie Corbett Profiling the TV comedy actor who found fame at the relatively late age of 36 via the Frost Report, revealing some lesser-known details of his life and career.

9.30 The One Ronnie Comedy show from 2010 in which Ronnie Corbett celebrates his 80th birthday with a series of sketches. Featuring guest stars including David Walliams, Matt Lucas and Miranda Hart. (R)

10.20 Catch Me If You Can (2002) A conman lies his way across America, posing as a pilot, a doctor and a lawyer, while outwitting the FBI at every turn. Fact-based drama, starring Leonardo DiCaprio, Tom Hanks, Christopher Walken and Martin Sheen. **★ ★ ★**

12.30 FILM: Shadow of a Doubt (1943) Alfred Hitchcock's thriller, starring Joseph Cotten. (b/w) **★ ★ ★ ★ 2.15 Top Gear: From A to Z** Part two of two. Alphabetical highlights from the Clarkson, May and Hammond era. (R) **3.15 Sign Zone: Hugh's War on Waste** Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall sets out to reduce the amount of food we waste. (R) **4.15 Sign Zone: The Secrets of the Mona Lisa** Exploring major new findings about Leonardo da Vinci's famous masterpiece. (R) **5.15 This Is BBC Two**

3.35 Midsomer Murders (R) 5.35 Wild River with Ray Mears

6.40 ITV Evening News; Weather.

7.00 Emmerdale Debbie visits Charity in prison, and the experience leaves her determined to leave town for good, while Chas is shocked by Gordon's account of his life since they split up.

7.30 Coronation Street Carla tells Johnny she will keep his secret if he leaves the factory and moves away, and gets more than she bargained for during a game of roulette with Robert.

8.00 Gino's Italian Escape - Islands in the Sun Gino D'Acampo ends his tour of Sicily by making cannoli, climbing the craters of Mount Etna and visiting a town that featured in the Godfather movies. Last in the series.

8.30 Coronation Street Carla swears Robert to secrecy after their moment of passion, and Roy tries to forget the incriminating letter which reveals Alan had an affair with Cathy's sister, Nessa.

9.00 The Big Quiz - Coronation Street v Emmerdale Stephen Mulhern hosts as stars from the soaps are tested on the biggest events and the funniest moments in the Yorkshire Dales and on the cobbles during 2015.

10.00 ITV News; Weather.

10.15 The Jonathan Ross Show Christmas Special The host subjects another batch of celebrity guests to no-holds-barred questioning. Plus, musical performances by (R)

11.20 American Pie: The Wedding (2003) The friends reunite to celebrate Jim and Michelle's forthcoming trip to the altar - but events quickly spiral out of control. Comedy sequel, with Jason Biggs. **★ ★ ★**

1.00 Jackpot247

3.35 The Golden Compass (2007) Fantasy adventure, starring Dakota Blue Richards and Nicole Kidman. **★ ★ ★**

5.50 Channel 4 News Including sport and weather.

6.00 Tangled (2010) A princess locked in a tower by a witch escapes with the aid of a bandit and tries to find her way home. Disney animation, with the voices of Mandy Moore and Zachary Levi. **★ ★ ★**

8.00 Jamie and Jimmy's Friday Night Feast New series. Orlando Bloom joins hosts Jamie Oliver and Jimmy Doherty to rustle up a Moroccan tagine. Plus, Asian seafood parcels and a great British banger that can be trusted.

9.00 A Good Day to Die Hard (2013) Premiere. John McClane goes to Moscow and helps his CIA agent son stop the Russian Mob from stealing nuclear weapons. Action adventure sequel, with Bruce Willis and Jai Courtney. **★ ★**

11.00 Rude Tube: Welcome to 2016 A real-life Alan Partridge, 50 Shades of Grey in Lego and Darth Vader on a mini Segway are among the items featured as Alex Zane marks the end of 2015 with a series compilation.

1.10 FILM: Damien: Omen II (1978) The Devil's son is now in his teens and has come to terms with his demonic fate, unleashing another series of murders. Horror sequel, with Jonathan Scott-Taylor and William Holden. **★ ★ ★ 3.00 Friday Night Dinner** Mum and Dad's anniversary goes awry. (R) **3.25 You Deserve This House** A woman who runs a swimming club for youngsters with disabilities. (R) **4.20 Location, Location, Location** Two couples who returned to the UK after travelling the world. (R) **5.15 Hugh's 3 Good Things: Best Bites** A recipe for a baked potato stuffed with curried mushrooms. (R) **5.20 Deal or No Deal (R)**

4.30 Greystoke: The Legend of Tarzan, Lord of the Apes (1984) Drama, starring Christopher Lambert. **★ ★ ★**

7.00 World's Strongest Man Final 2015 Action from the Grand Final of the competition, which took place in Malaysia, as the 10 competitors who made it past the heats went head to head for the trophy. Last in the series; 5 News Update

8.00 Christmas with the Double Acts An hour of side-splitting fun with some of the greatest double acts to have graced the small screen, proving that when it comes to comedy, two are often better than one; (R) 5 News Update

9.00 An Audience with Ken Dodd Comedy and entertainment from the Liverpool comedian, as he celebrates his long career in showbusiness with the help of an all-star audience. (R)

10.55 Greatest Stand-Up Comedians Acountdown of the 50 funniest people to have performed stand-up routines, featuring Tommy Cooper, Joan Rivers and Robin Williams. With contributions by Paul Hogan and Ross Noble. (R)

1.55 SuperCasino Viewers get the chance to take part in live interactive gaming, with a mix of roulette-wheel spins and lively chat from the presenting team. **3.10 Loch Lomond: A Year in the Wild** It is June at Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park, and cameras follow the newborns as they learn to fight, find food and avoid predators. (R) **4.00 Loch Lomond: A Year in the Wild** Cameras document autumn events at Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park, a time for the red deer rut, when stags battle for the right to breed. (R) **4.45 House Doctor** Ann Maurice helps a couple spruce up their tiny cottage in a bid to make it more attractive to prospective buyers, using small furniture to create an illusion of space. (R) **5.10 House Doctor** Advice for a couple desperate to sell their Bournemouth home. (R)

CHOICE



Alexander Armstrong

Bruce's Hall of Fame with Alexander Armstrong (BBC1, 6pm)

When Bruce Forsyth fell at his home and suffered minor concussion in October, he was told to rest for a few days. Fronting this show was out of the question, so Alexander Armstrong, who was due to be a guest on the strand, has stepped in to fill the gap. Joining him in paying tribute to their inspirations are comedian and actress Catherine Tate; former Pussycat Doll Kimberley Wyatt; Australian actor, singer and dancer Adam Garcia; EastEnders actress and singer Shona McGarty; Britain's Got Talent runner-up, magician and illusionist Jamie Raven, and West-End star Beverley Knight. Paying homage to their heroes, they discover what it's like to perform as their showbiz legends would have done.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen. **11.30** James Martin: Home Comforts. **12.00** BBC News; Weather. **12.10** Football Focus. **12.50** Saturday Sportsday. **1.00** Live Darts: BDO World Championships. Coverage of the opening day of the tournament. **4.30** Final Score. **5.10** Celebrity Mastermind. **5.40** BBC News. **5.50** Regional Programme.

6.00 Bruce's Hall of Fame with Alexander Armstrong. Presenter Alexander Armstrong steps in for host Bruce Forsyth as seven famous faces are given a chance to pay homage to their idols. Comedienne Catherine Tate, former Pussycat Doll Kimberley Wyatt, actor Adam Garcia, West End actress Beverley Knight, comedienne Katherine Ryan, EastEnders star Shona McGarty and Britain's Got Talent runner-up Jamie Raven take to the stage to enjoy a moment in the limelight as their favourite stars.

7.10 Film: Iron Man 3. (2013) Premiere. The armoured avenger hunts for the mastermind behind an untraceable series of bombings, despite being cut off from his usual resources and traumatised by a recent brush with death. His search uncovers a secret conspiracy involving a drug that renders the user indestructible. Superhero adventure sequel, starring Robert Downey Jr, Gwyneth Paltrow and Don Cheadle.

9.10 Casualty. As Cal struggles to deal with his recent terrifying discovery, he discovers he is much braver than he realises. Hospital drama, starring Richard Winsor and Lee Mead.

10.00 The National Lottery Live. Gabby Roslin presents as the all-important winning numbers are revealed.

10.10 BBC News: Weather.

10.30 Match of the Day. Gary Lineker presents highlights of the latest Premier League fixtures, including West Ham United v Liverpool, Manchester United v Swansea City and Watford v Manchester City; National Lottery Update.

12.00 Film: Black Death. (2010) A naive monk joins a band of mercenaries on a mission to expose witchcraft as the bubonic plague sweeps the country. Medieval thriller, starring Sean Bean.

1.35 Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.40** BBC News.

BBC2

6.10 Race to Super Bowl 50. (R) **7.00 Film:** The Valley of Gwangi. (1969) **8.35 Film:** Merrill's Marauders. (1962) **10.10** Animal Park. (R) **11.10** Natural World. (R) **12.00** James Martin: Home Comforts. (R) **12.30** Len and Ainsley's Big Food Adventure. (R) **1.15** Sex Symbols: Talking Pictures. **1.55 Film:** Cat on a Hot Tin Roof. (1958) Drama, starring Paul Newman and Elizabeth Taylor. **3.40** Coast. (R) **4.30** Live Darts: BDO World Championships. **5.40** Growing Up Wild: Natural World. (R)

6.40 **Flag It!** Paul Martin looks into the history of Wellington College, Berkshire, where experts Elizabeth Talbot and Philip Serrell evaluate antiques before the auction. (R)

7.40 The Many Faces of Ronnie Corbett. Profiling the TV comedy actor who found fame at the relatively late age of 36 via the Frost Report, revealing some lesser-known details of his life and career. (R)

8.40 Dad's Army. (R)

9.10 Leningrad and the Orchestra That Defied Hitler. Amanda Vickery and Tom Service tell the story of the remarkable performance at the Philharmonic Hall in Leningrad in 1942 of Shostakovich's 7th Symphony. In the midst of a siege that would ultimately kill around 750,000 civilians, an orchestra of starving musicians was assembled to perform the composer's latest work, which itself had to be smuggled into the city after being completed while Shostakovich had been evacuated. This film explores the development of the music and features extracts from the symphony, filmed in the same location as the historic concert, and conducted by Maxim Shostakovich, the composer's son.

10.40 QI XL. An extended edition, in which question-master Stephen Fry probes the subject of Messing with Your Mind, with Sarah Millican, Tommy Tiernan, Josh Widdicombe and Alan Davies.

11.25 Darts: BDO World Championships. Action from the opening day at the Lakeside Country Club in Frimley Green, which featured first-round matches in the men's and ladies' competitions.

12.15 Darts: BDO World Championships – Extra Time. **2.15 Film:** Horror Hospital. (1973) **3.40** This is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITY: Fort Boyard Ultimate Challenge. **6.20** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan. (R) **7.00** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.05** Oddbods. (R) **7.10** Sooty. (R) **7.20** Super 4. (R) **7.35** Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **8.05** The Aquabats! Super Show! (R) **8.30** Thunderbirds Are Go. **9.00** The Tom & Jerry Show. (R) **9.15** The Tom & Jerry Show. (R) **9.25** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **10.15** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **11.20** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **12.20** ITV News: Weather. **12.30** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **1.30** Catchphrase. (R) **2.15** Off Their Rockers. (R) **2.45 Film:** From Russia with Love. (1963) James Bond thriller, starring Sean Connery. **5.00** Panda Babies. (R)

6.00 Regional Programme; Weather.

6.15 **ITV News:** Weather.

6.30 New You've Been Framed. New series. Harry Hill narrates a comical selection of mishaps filmed by viewers.

7.00 Ninja Warrior UK. New series. Competitors from across the nation test their strength, speed and courage in this obstacle-course challenge, hosted by Ben Shepherd, Rochelle Humes and Chris Kamara. Those who make it to the end of the adrenaline-fuelled mission face one final task – scaling the heights of a tower named Mount Midoriyama – as the battle it out for the title of Ninja Warrior UK.

8.00 Take Me Out. New series. A cosmetics consultant, a video marketing whiz, a children's football coach and an account manager set out to impress a line-up of single women.

9.00 Film: The Dark Knight. (2008) In the sequel to Batman Begins, the masked hero finds a new ally in his war on organised crime in Gotham as crusading new district attorney, Harvey Dent. However, both men are pushed to their limits by the rise of the Joker, a criminal mastermind spreading chaos and destruction throughout the city for his own amusement. Comic-book thriller, starring Christian Bale, Aaron Eckhart and an Oscar-winning Heath Ledger. Continues after the news.

10.05 **ITV News:** Weather.

10.25 Film: The Dark Knight. (2008) Concluded.

12.15 Jackpot247. **3.00** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.10 How I Met Your Mother. (R) **6.30 Film:** The War of the Worlds. (1953) Sci-fi drama, starring Gene Barry. **8.00** The Morning Line. **9.00 Film:** True Grit. (1969) Western, starring John Wayne. **11.40 Film:** Thunderbirds. (2004) Sci-fi adventure, starring Bill Paxton. **1.30** Channel 4 Racing. Live coverage from Sandown Park, Ayr and Chelmsford City. **4.00** Channel 4 News. **4.20** The Simpsons. (R) **4.50 Film:** Mission: Impossible. (1996) Action thriller, starring Tom Cruise.

6.50 Film: Mission: Impossible 2. (2000) Secret agent Ethan Hunt is sent to find and destroy the only sample of a deadly man-made virus. However, he faces tough opposition in a former spy-turned-criminal mastermind who has already acquired the cure and now wants the pathogen itself. Director John Woo's action thriller sequel, starring Tom Cruise, Dougray Scott, Thandie Newton and Anthony Hopkins.

9.00 The World's Greatest Spy Movies. A countdown of the 10 most thrilling espionage films of all time, chosen by real spies and spy-masters from MI6, the CIA and the KGB. The programme untangles fact from fiction, from Le Carre-style gritty realism to the outlandish espionage fantasies of Jason Bourne, and British superhero James Bond, revealing which film comes closest to the truth, and which has won the number one spot.

10.35 Film: Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy. (2011) A former intelligence operative is brought out of retirement to uncover a Soviet mole in a high-ranking position in MI6. Cold War thriller, starring Gary Oldman and Colin Firth.

1.00 Film: Marley. (2012) Documentary about Bob Marley, examining his life and his enduring political and musical impact.

3.30 TFI New Year's Eve. Chris Evans prepares to welcome in the new year with a mix of chat, raucous stunts and music, with Olly Murs, Quentin Tarantino, Sia and New Order, the Vaccines and Izzy Bizu. (R) **5.00** Phil Spencer: Secret Agent. The property expert offers advice to a woman in Waterlooville, Hampshire, who has been trying to sell her three-bed terrace for six months without any luck. (R) **5.50** How I Met Your Mother. Marshall becomes terrified of his boss after seeing him yell at a colleague and begins to question whether he can justify staying in his job. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **8.55** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **9.30** The Saturday Show. **11.30** Loch Lomond: A Year in the Wild. (R) **12.30** Loch Lomond: A Year in the Wild. (R) **1.25 Film:** Columbo Goes to the Guillotine. (1969) Detective drama, starring Peter Falk. **3.20 Film:** Columbo: Candidate for Crime. (1973) Detective drama, starring Peter Falk. **5.15** The Hunt for Hitler's Missing Millions. (R)

6.10 World War II in Colour. The story of the global conflict told using colourised archive footage, beginning with an examination of its origins. Narrated by actor Robert Powell. (R)

7.00 Ben Fogle: New Lives in the Winter Wonderland. The adventurer travels to Alaska to visit Bretwood Higman and Erin McCittrick, who hiked 4,000 miles to get to their new home, where they are now bringing up their two children. They spend half the year in a self-built Mongolian-style yurt on the mountainside, with the other six months dedicated to hiking in the region's wildernesses. (R)

8.00 Building the Ice Hotel. The work of builders constructing Icehotel, a sophisticated structure built every year since 1990 in the village of Jukkasjarvi – more than 120 miles inside the Arctic Circle. (R)

8.55 **5 News Weekend.**

9.00 Football League Tonight. Kelly Cates and George Riley present extended highlights of the weekend's top matches, including the Middlesbrough v Derby County at the Riverside Stadium in the Championship and Sheffield United v Peterborough United at Bramall Lane in League One. Boro and the Rams are both considered as strong contenders to gain automatic promotion back to the Premier League, so a win over one of their rivals would be seen as a morale boost for both. Plus, all the goals from League Two, were matches included Portsmouth v Crawley Town at Fratton Park.

10.30 20 Moments That Rocked Talent Shows. A journey through the instances that rocked the genre and the fall-out that followed. (R)

11.55 Access. Showbiz news and gossip.

12.00 SuperCasino. **3.10** Loch Lomond: A Year in the Wild. (R) **4.00** World's Strongest Man 2015. (R) **4.50** Make It Big. (R) **5.40** Angels of Jarm. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three

7.00 Great TV Mistakes **7.10** Top Gear **8.00** Don't Tell the Bride **9.10** Sherlock **10.45** Family Guy **1.20** Together **3.50** Great TV Mistakes **4.00** Close

BBC Four

7.00 Stories from the Dark Earth: Meet the Ancestors Revisited **8.00** Castles – Britain's Fortified History **9.00** The Young Montalbano **10.50** The Kate Bush Story: Running Up That Hill **11.50** Kate Bush at the BBC **12.50** An Evening with Glen Campbell **2.10** Country at the BBC **3.40** Close

ITV2

11.50 The Big Quiz – Coronation Street v Emmerdale **12.50** Catchphrase **1.30** Film: The Little Vampire (2000) **3.30** Film: Horrid Henry: The Movie (2011) **5.25** Film: Liar Liar (1997) **7.05** Film: Evan Almighty (2007) **9.00** Take Me Out – The Gossip **10.00** Film: Bridget Jones's Diary (2001) **11.00** Film: American Pie (1999) **1.50** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **2.40** Teleshopping **5.40** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3

11.25 Film: Emma (1996) **1.55** Foyle's War **3.55** Film: Columbo: Agenda for Murder (1990) **5.55** Midsomer Murders **8.00** Foyle's War **10.00** Lewis **12.00** Marchlands **1.05** The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes **2.05** ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping

ITV4

11.50 Storage Wars **12.45** Film: Spartacus (1960) **4.30** Film: Superman (1978) **7.35** Film: Space Cowboys (2000) **10.00** Film: Magnum Force (1973) **12.35** Film: Inside Man (2006) **3.00** Teleshopping

E4

11.00 Made in Chelsea: New Year **12.00** Couples Come Dine with Me **2.00** Rude(ish) Tube **3.00** Film: Toy Story OF TERROR! (2013) **3.25** Toy Story Toons **4.00** Ice Age: A Mammoth Christmas **4.25** Film: Casper (1995) **6.30** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** Film: The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn – Part 2 (2012) **11.15** Gogglebox **12.55** The Inbetweeners **1.55** The IT Crowd **2.55** Gogglebox **3.35** Hollyoaks

Film4

11.00 Rio (2011) **1.00** Stuart Little (1999) **2.45** The Muppet Christmas Carol (1992) **4.35** Bandslam (2009) **6.45** The Family Stone (2005) **9.00** Rise of the Planet of the Apes (2011) Sci-fi thriller, starring James Franco. **11.05** Scary Movie (2000) **12.45** Scary Movie 2 (2001) **2.20** Silent House (2011) **4.00** Close



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CHOICE



Gillian Anderson

War & Peace (BBC1, 9pm)

Writer Andrew Davies, the man who turned Pride and Prejudice's Mr Darcy into a sex symbol, is now hoping he can transform Leo Tolstoy's tome into a last-screen classic. The latest adaptation opens in 1805, and as Russia declares war on Napoleon Bonaparte's French army, the lives of Pierre Bezukhov (Paul Dano), Andrei Bolkonsky (James Norton) and Natasha Rostova (Lily James) are about to change forever. Pierre is the illegitimate son of a wealthy count on the verge of death, his best friend Andrei is equally unhappy and eager for the challenge of war, and in Moscow, spirited teenager Natasha is desperate to experience life and love. The supporting cast includes Gillian Anderson and Jim Broadbent.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. 8.00 Match of the Day. (R) **9.30** Wanted Down Under. (R) **10.15** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **11.15** Money for Nothing. (R) **12.00** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News. Weather. **1.15** Britain's Muslim Soldiers. **1.55** Eat Well for Less? (R) **2.55** Escape to the Country. (R) **3.25** Billionaire Boy. (R) **4.25** Songs of Praise. **5.00** Great Barrier Reef with David Attenborough. (R)

6.00 BBC News.**6.20 Regional Programme.**

6.30 Countryfile Compilation: Winter Wildlife. Ellie Harrison reports from the Cotswold Water Park, where she helps with winter maintenance and finds out about a plan to study birds' underwater habits using plastic ducks. Matt Baker reports on Irish hares, Julia Bradbury goes in search of seals in Norfolk, Richard Taylor-Jones captures animals on camera, and Adam Henson helps bring Exmoor ponies down from the moors. Plus, a look back at the most memorable moments from the series featuring winter wildlife. Including Weather For The Week Ahead.

7.30 Still Open All Hours. Granville discovers a gap in the shop's security, and finds his efforts to matchmake Gastric and Made threatened by a neighbour's home cooking. A cherry picker causes anxiety.

8.00 Antiques Roadshow. Fiona Bruce presents the show from Bowood House in Wiltshire, where the items brought in to be valued include an account of the sinking of the Titanic by an officer who survived.

9.00 War & Peace. New series. Andrew Davies' adaptation of Tolstoy's epic story of five aristocratic families experiencing Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1805.

10.00 BBC News.**10.20 Regional Programme.**

10.30 Match of the Day 2. Mark Chapman reviews the day's two Premier League matches, which were Crystal Palace v Chelsea at Selhurst Park and Everton v Tottenham Hotspur at Goodison Park.

11.35 Film: The Road. (2009) Drama, starring Viggo Mortensen, Kodi Smit-McPhee and Charlize Theron. **1.15** Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.20** BBC News.

BBC2

6.30 The A to Z of TV Gardening. (R) **7.15** Monty Don's Italian Gardens. (R) **8.15** Countryfile Compilation: The Farming Year. (R) **9.15** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **10.45** Len and Ainsley's Big Food Adventure. (R) **11.30** Len and Ainsley's Big Food Adventure. (R) **12.15** MOTD2 Extra. **1.00** Live Darts: BDO World Championships. Coverage of the second day of the tournament. **5.00** Flog It! (R)

6.00 The Great History Quiz: The Tudors. Kirsty Young asks the questions in this quiz which sees two teams of historians, captained by Lucy Worsley and Dan Snow, answer questions on all aspects of Tudor life. The contestants are writer and broadcaster Anna Whitelock, Horrible Histories consultant Jeng Jenner, author Kate Williams and architectural historian Jonathan Foyle. (R)

7.00 The Millionaires Gift Guide. Documentaries examining the world of event planners and suppliers of luxury goods, who cater to a wealthy clientele, including a children's Christmas party at a stately home.

8.00 Dragons' Den. A former contestant makes a second attempt to impress the panel, and a former figure skater fails to inspire much confidence in Peter Jones.

9.00 My Mediterranean with Adrian Chiles. Part one of two. The journalist experiences religious festivals in the region, learning about the similarities and differences between the three main religions that co-exist there.

10.00 Charlie Brooker's 2015 Wipe. The broadcaster takes a satirical look back at the events of the past 12 months, including the beginning of Corbyn-mania and a Tory majority, and the end of Page Three. (R)

11.00 Abz on the Christmas Farm. Abz Love and his girlfriend Vicky Fallon spend Christmas reflecting on the successes and failures of their year running a smallholder farm in Wales. (R)

11.30 Darts: BDO World Championships. Action from the second day at the Lakeside Country Club in Frimley Green.

12.20 Darts: BDO World Championships - Extra Time. **2.20** Sign Zone: Countryfile Compilation: The Farming Year. (R) **3.15** Holy City. (R) **4.15** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Fort Boyard Ultimate Challenge. **6.20** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.30** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.50** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.00** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.05** Oddbods. (R) **7.10** Sooty. (R) **7.20** Super 4. (R) **7.35** Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **7.50** Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **8.05** The Aquabats! Super Show! (R) **8.30** A Grizzly New Year's Tale: The Crystal Eye. (R) **9.00** The Tom & Jerry Show. (R) **9.25** The Tom & Jerry Show. (R) **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **10.25** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **11.25** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **12.30** ITV News: Weather. **12.40** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **1.40** Catchphrase. (R) **2.25** Ninja Warrior UK. (R) **3.25** Film: Goldfinger. (1964) James Bond adventure, starring Sean Connery. **5.35** Regional Programme: Weather. **5.45** ITV News: Weather.

6.00 Ninja Warrior UK. Competitors from across the UK test their strength, speed and courage in this obstacle-course challenge, hosted by Ben Shepherd, Rochelle Humes and Chris Kamara.

7.00 Beowulf: Return to the Shieldlands. New series. The warrior returns to his homeland after 20 years to pay his respects to the town's ailing leader, and sets out to hunt down a mysterious creature terrorising the land.

8.00 Endeavour. New series. The young detective is suspended from duty following a recent case. However, he is roused from his bitterness and self-pity when the body of a woman who went missing at a funfair on Cowley Green is found near his home. He resolves to conduct a secret investigation of his own, which leads him to the city's social elite and a disturbing secret hidden in plain sight. Shaun Evans stars as the young Inspector Morse in the third series of the detective drama.

10.00 ITV News: Weather.

10.20 Joanna Lumley's Trans-Siberian Adventure. The actress travels the length of the Trans-Siberian Railway, taking in Hong Kong, Beijing, the Great Wall and the Gobi desert in the first leg of her trek. (R)

11.20 Premiership Rugby Union. Action from the eighth round of fixtures.

12.15 Jackpot247. **3.00** The Jeremy Kyle Show USA. (R) **3.40** ITV Nightscreen. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.15 Film: The Parent Trap. (1961) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** The Simpsons. (R) **12.55** The Simpsons. (R) **1.25** The Simpsons. (R) **1.55** Film: Jungle 2 Jungle. (1997) Comedy, starring Tim Allen. **3.55** Film: A Monster in Paris. (2011) **5.40** Channel 4 News.

6.00 Film: Fantastic Four. (2005) A scientist and four members of his crew develop superhuman powers after exposure to cosmic radiation on a mission to study an energy storm in space. Unfortunately, one of them chooses to use his newfound abilities for evil purposes, compelling the others to join forces to stop him. Sci-fi comic-book adventure, starring Ioan Gruffudd, Jessica Alba, Chris Evans and Michael Chiklis.

8.00 Walking the Himalayas. Levison Wood and his guide Malang Darya travels through Pakistan-controlled Kashmir and the Gilgit Valley, and aims to get as close to the heavily militarised border with India as he can, a dangerous journey that involves crossing a raging river and being met with suspicion by the local authorities. They meet a Nomadic tribe that has driven herds across the Himalayas for centuries and visits a valley which has been closed to foreigners for nearly 70 years.

9.00 Deutschland 83. New series. German Cold War spy drama. A young soldier serving in the East German military in 1983 is recruited to become a secret agent. He is given a new identity and sent over the Berlin Wall, where he must infiltrate the West German army and uncover details of American military plans in Europe. In German.

10.00 Gogglebox 2015. Highlights of the past year on Gogglebox, revisiting comments from armchair critics including Leon and June, Steph and Dom, Christopher and Stephen, and Sandy and Sandra. (R)

11.30 The Rich Kids of Instagram: Cutting Edge. Documentary examining the lives of affluent young people who use photo and video-sharing service Instagram to flaunt their luxurious lifestyles online. (R)

12.30 How the Rich Live Longer. (R) **1.25** Hollyoaks. (R) **3.35** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.55** How I Met Your Mother. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! Peppa Pig. **6.05** Bananas in Pyjamas. (R) **6.20** Bob the Builder. (R) **6.30** Ticky Tock. (R) **6.40** Zack and Quack. (R) **6.55** Roobarb and Custard Too. (R) **7.00** Make Way for Noddy. (R) **7.15** Milkshake! Monkey. (R) **7.20** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.40** Little Princess. (R) **7.55** Pip Ahoy! (R) **8.10** Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) **8.40** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **8.55** Wanda and the Alien. (R) **9.10** Toby's Travelling Circus. (R) **9.20** Jelly Jam. (R) **9.30** LazyTown. (R) **9.55** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.30** Football League Tonight. (R) **12.00** Funnies Fails. Falls & Flops. (R) **12.30** Loch Lomond: A Year in the Wild. (R) **1.30** Loch Lomond: A Year in the Wild. (R) **2.30** Film: The Water Horse: Legend of the Deep. (2007) Children's fantasy adventure, starring Alex Etel. **4.35** 5 News Weekend. **4.45** Film: Snow White. (2001) Fairy-tale fantasy, starring Kristin Kreuk.

6.25 Film: Cinderella. (1950) An orphan is forced to live a life of servitude by her cruel stepmother. The king of the realm she lives in organises a lavish ball to find a bride for his son, and a caring fairy godmother puts her magic to the task of turning the downtrodden girl into a princess. Disney animated fairytale, with the voices of Ilene Woods, William Phipps and Verna Felton.

8.00 Film: Legally Blonde. (2001) A seemingly dizzy teenager is heartbroken when her boyfriend dumps her because he thinks she is not intelligent enough to help his political career. To prove him wrong she enrolls at Harvard, but finds herself out of her depth as other students do their best to humiliate her. Comedy, starring Reese Witherspoon, Luke Wilson, Selma Blair, Matthew Davis and Victor Garber.

10.00 Most Shocking Celebrity Moments 2015. Countdown of the biggest showbiz stories and scandals of the year, including Bruce Jenner's transition to Caitlyn and the Top Gear bust-up involving Jeremy Clarkson. (R)

12.40 SuperCasino. Viewers get the chance to take part in live interactive gaming, with a mix of roulette-wheel spins and lively chat from the presenting team. **3.10** World's Strongest Man 2015. Action from the second heat of the competition from Malaysia. (R) **4.00** House Doctor. A cluttered B&B on the Norfolk coast. (R) **4.25** Make It Big. (R) **5.45** Angels of Justice. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three
7.00 Top Gear **8.00** Don't Tell the Bride **9.00** Film: Shrek the Third (2007) **10.25** Russell Howard's Good News **10.55** Family Guy **11.40** American Dad! **12.25** Russell Howard's Good News **1.25** Footballers. Sex. Money. What's Gone Wrong? **2.25** Great TV Mistakes **2.35** Film: Hamlet 2 (2008) **4.00** Close

BBC Four
7.00 Treasures of Heaven **8.00** Westminster Abbey **9.00** Film: Citizen Kane (1941) **11.00** Orson Welles: Talking Pictures **11.45** The Richest Songs in the World **1.15** Michael Palin's Quest for Artemisia **2.15** Westminster Abbey **3.15** Britain on Film: Kids Today **3.45** Close

ITV2
12.25 Take Me Out **1.30** Take Me Out - The Gossip **2.30** Film: Evan Almighty (2007) **4.35** Film: Jurassic Park (1993) **7.00** Film: Nanny McPhee (2005) **9.00** Film: The Shawshank Redemption (1994) **11.55** Film: The Faculty (1998) **1.55** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **2.20** Rizzle Kicks: The Hot Desk **2.30** Teleshopping

ITV3
11.40 Film: Columbo: Agenda for Murder (1990) **1.45** The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes **3.55** Foyle's War **6.00** Midsomer Murders **8.00** The Cruise Ship **9.00** The Royal Variety Performance **2015** **11.50** Lewis **1.40** Film: 10 Little Indians (1974) **3.20** Where the Heart Is **4.40** Heartbeat **5.30** On the Buses **5.55** ITV3 Nightscreen

ITV4
12.00 Film: Destry (1954) **2.05** Film: Cheyenne Autumn (1964) **5.10** Film: Rio Bravo (1959) **8.00** Premiership Rugby Union **9.00** Film: The Krays (1990) **11.35** Film: Public Enemies (2009) **2.15** Ax Men **3.00** Teleshopping

E4
12.30 Film: Space Chimps (2008) **2.05** Film: Space Chimps 2: Zartog Strikes Back (2010) **3.45** Toy Story Toons **4.10** Ice Age: A Mammoth Christmas **4.40** Ride(ish) Tube **5.00** The Big Bang Theory **8.00** Film: Johnny English Reborn (2011) **10.00** Tattoo Fixers **11.05** The Inbetweeners **12.15** The IT Crowd **1.20** Gogglebox **2.10** How I Met Your Mother **3.00** Rules of Engagement **3.40** The Cleveland Show **4.25** Revenge

Film4
11.00 ParaNorman (2012) **1.00** Stuart Little 2 (2002) **2.30** Tooth Fairy (2010) **4.35** Inkheart (2008) **6.40** Cutthroat Island (1995) **9.00** Faster (2010) **10.55** GI Joe: The Rise of Cobra (2009) **1.10** Choke (2008) **3.05** Close

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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY
Archipelago, BBC1, 12.05am
A man prepares to leave home to do voluntary work in Africa. His mother plans to see him off with a family get-together at their holiday home in the Isles of Scilly, but the gathering only exposes the deep-seated conflicts between them. Drama, starring Tom Hiddleston, Kate Fahy and Lydia Leonard. (2010)

TUESDAY
A Wife's Nightmare, Channel 5, 3.15pm
Premiere. A woman's life is turned upside down by the arrival of a teenage girl claiming to be her husband's long-lost daughter. Drama based on a true story, with Jennifer Beals. Edited for sex. (2014)

WEDNESDAY
Notorious, Channel 4, 12.35am
Biopic of Notorious B.I.G., whose rise to fame took him from being a Brooklyn street hustler and crack dealer to become a respected and influential rap artist, before he was brutally murdered at the age of 24. Starring Jamal Woolard, Derek Luke, Dennis LA White and Angela Bassett. (2009)



Notorious, Wednesday, Channel 4, 12.35am

THURSDAY
Expecting Amish, Channel 5, 3.15pm
Premiere. An Amish teenager returning home from a year away realises she is pregnant, and faces being ostracised from her family. Drama, starring AJ Michalka and Alyson Stoner. (2014)

FRIDAY
Amy, Channel 4, 9pm
Premiere. Documentary portrait of soul, jazz and Rn'B singer-songwriter Amy Winehouse, whose untimely death in July 2011 followed a well-publicised history of drugs and alcohol abuse. Director Asif Kapadia traces Amy's rise and demise over the 13 years preceding her death, telling her story via her music and autobiographical song lyrics, video footage shot by friends and family, archive television clips, plus voiceover interviews with those who were personally and professionally close to her. Contributors include Pete Doherty, Mitch Winehouse, Tony Bennett, Mark Ronson and Tyler James. (2015)

Wagons roll in the Wild West of Yorkshire

What's this? A rootin' tootin' Western from ITV? Well, not exactly. Although some of the pictures released by the broadcaster to promote the show look as if they're set in America's wild west, the truth couldn't be further from that.

Jessica Raine heads the cast of this eight-part drama which is set in North Yorkshire during the 1870s and focuses on the building of a railway viaduct.

Doesn't sound that exciting does it? In fact, you're probably wishing it was a Western after all. However, the series has been created and written by Steve Thompson, who numbers Sherlock and Doctor Who on his CV, while other key figures in its production have worked on such acclaimed shows as Vera, Cilla, Marchlands, Mrs Biggs and The Widower.

Jericho is the name of the shanty town created by the misfits, pioneers, settlers and outcasts who arrive in the area to work on the construction.

"Jericho was a real place," claims Thompson. "It was a little shanty town in the shadow of the Ribbleshead Viaduct in North Yorkshire. Shanty towns tended to be named after famous battles or biblical places. Jericho was the one at Ribbleshead so we chose it for the name of the series."

"These shanty towns started to appear when they were building the railways across Yorkshire in the 1870s. These places were like wild west towns. So the idea of making a British Western was new and exciting to me."

And that also goes some way to explaining those puzzling publicity photographs...

Raine plays Annie Quintain, a penniless widow who, along with her teenage children, sets up a boarding house populated by labourers.

"Annie learns about this navy town 15 miles away so they get on a train and go out there," explains the writer. "And it is just like being on a wagon train to the wild west. It's people going out to the frontier because the frontier is free."

"That's how America was created and it was the same with this culture

in Yorkshire at the time. The frontier was the only free place where you could actually go and start a new life."

It's clear that Thompson admires Annie's spark, and he claims she was based on someone he once knew.

"She had three young kids and then her husband left her," he reveals. "She's one of those people who thought, 'Right, I'm going to build a new life for myself and my kids.' She was determined to stand on her own and never be reliant on anyone ever again. She learned how to do plastering and wiring and she fitted her own kitchen."

"She was never going to rely on a tradesman. Annie Quintain is like that. For her, the great motivation in her life is her children. My mother was the same. She was a fanatical mum and a Yorkshirewoman as well. Whatever her kids wanted she was going to get it for them. So this poor woman is in a navy town with no money and she's decided she's going to build a business empire."

And over the next eight weeks, we're going to watch her do it.



Jessica Raine stars in Jericho, Thursday, ITV, 9pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY
Griff's Great Britain
ITV, 8pm
New series. Griff Rhys Jones sets out to explore eight very disparate kinds of quintessentially British terrain, investigating how they have dictated different ways of living, working and playing – both in the past and as they are now – across the entire country, while also unearthing quirky and funny facts en route. He begins by heading to the South Downs, which are situated in Hampshire and East and West Sussex, taking to the air for a bird's eye view and attempting to get to know one of the region's woolliest inhabitants.

When Ant and Dec Met the Prince: 40 Years of the Prince's Trust
ITV, 9pm
Anthony McPartlin and Declan Donnelly are granted an insight into the work of the Prince's Trust as they accompany Prince Charles on a number of engagements, as well as meeting people who have benefited directly from the charity. The duo hear anecdotes from his days in the Royal Navy and his life as a grandfather, and also speak to those closest to the prince, including the Duchess of Cornwall and his sons William and Harry. Plus, Ant and Dec pay an emotional visit to the set of Byker Grove.

TUESDAY
Big Fat Quiz of Everything
Channel 4, 9pm
Not content with asking questions about what happened in a given year, Jimmy Carr is now testing famous faces' knowledge of art, literature, television, music, geography, politics, science and celebrity from the last 100,000 years of human history. Jonathan Ross, Chelsea Peretti, Jack Whitehall, Mel Giedroyc, Richard Ayoade and Noel Fielding try to carry off the title by proving they know how witch hunters determined if someone was a witch, and which 1970s board game was accused of selling sex in a box.

Celebrity Big Brother: Live Launch
Channel 5, 9pm
New series. The fly-on-the-wall fun begins once more as Emma Willis invites a fresh group of famous faces to move in together and have their every word and move recorded for the enjoyment of the viewing public. They will be entering a house transformed into a striking theatrical setting that reflects the vaudeville theatres.



Griff's Great Britain, Monday, ITV, 8pm

WEDNESDAY
Midsomer Murders
ITV, 8pm
When wealthy landowner Gregory Lancaster's body goes missing on the night of his death, a sinister web of secrets and lies is exposed in the village of Little Malton. As DCI Barnaby, DS Nelson and new Forensic Pathologist Kam Karimore investigate the mysterious crime, they find themselves drawn into a macabre world of body-snatching. Detective drama, starring Neil Dudgeon, Gwilym Lee, Manjinder Virk and Helen Baxendale.

THURSDAY
Death in Paradise
BBC1, 9pm
We're in the cold, dreary post-Christmas slump, so what better time for this detective drama to return and inject a little sunshine into our lives – even if the tropical locations do come with a side order of murder? The run begins with DI

Humphrey Goodman (Kris Marshall) and the team being called in to investigate when millionaire environmentalist and scientist Dan Hagen (Julian Ovenden, fresh from ITV's recent live version of The Sound of Music) is shot on his boat while out at sea.

FRIDAY
Mr Selfridge
ITV, 9pm
The lavish period drama returns for a fourth and final run, set nine years after the last series. It finds Harry Selfridge at the apex of his power, a retail giant in the roaring twenties. Rumours of his latest romantic dalliances are the talk of the social circuit at Victor Colleano's decadent new nightclub. At home, Rosalie's daughter, Tatiana is the apple of Harry's eye, his mother Lois is as stoic as ever, and the vivacious Violette now lives in Paris.

Royal Wives at War
BBC2, 9pm
A revealing look at the abdication crisis of 1936, through the eyes of the two women at its very heart. In a number of dramatised monologues set in 1967, Elizabeth the Queen Mother (Emma Davies) and Wallis Simpson (Gina McKee) look back at the dramatic events that led to King Edward VIII giving up the throne for the woman he loved.

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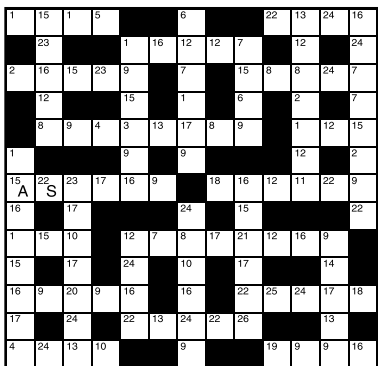
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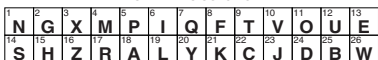
BRAIN GYM No.358

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:



Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

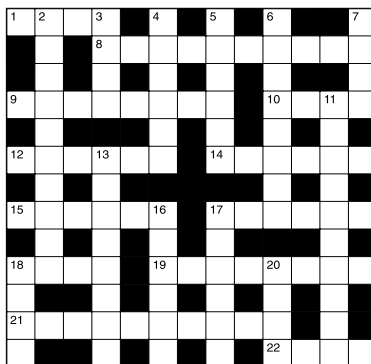
Cryptic Clues:

Across

- Cut 7 with 1 for a change (4)
- I am to take situation involving punishment task (10)
- The era of scarcity is not a long one (8)
- Harvest rotten fruit taken from 4 (4)
- Profane oaths wear out as weapons (6)
- Sucker put in bus to London (6)
- Vest so made for giving warmth (6)
- The gambler has reformed? (6)
- At that time contained in earthenware jugs (4)
- No, I'd rise to ridicule (8)
- A very small volume needed for meeting records (6-4)
- Little Edward in a whirl in the water (4)

Down

- Does it indicate the darkest hour when they're on guard? (5-5)
- Have something to eat right on the jetty (4)
- A passer of weapons (6)
- Value female donkey? (6)
- Begin to be tip-top tipster? (5,3)
- As obtained from a bad-tempered photographer? (4)
- Honourably open - but the directors won't understand (5-5)
- Being very hungry, talk wildly but with intelligence (8)
- Very wet turf on lair (6)
- Prohibit line on handcart (6)
- Apparently I should receive this book (4)
- Consideration for which one would leave (4)



Quick Clues:

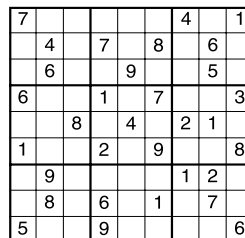
Across

- Rule (4)
- Improve (10)
- Provident (8)
- Kind (4)
- Handwriting (6)
- Strain (6)
- Hesitated (6)
- Chastise (6)
- Volcano (4)
- Saucy (8)
- Prudence (10)
- Entrance (4)

Down

- Sorcery (10)
- Gape (4)
- Let (6)
- Zodiac sign (6)
- Brothers (8)
- Small valley (4)
- Afterthought (10)
- Example (8)
- Make moist (6)
- Wan (6)
- Purposes (4)
- Pain (4)

Sudoku



Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

7	1	2	6	4	8	9	5	3
5	3	6	1	9	2	7	4	8
9	4	8	7	3	5	1	2	6
2	6	4	5	8	7	3	9	1
3	5	7	4	1	9	6	8	2
1	8	9	2	6	3	5	7	4
8	2	5	3	7	6	4	1	9
4	7	3	9	2	1	8	6	5
6	9	1	8	5	4	2	3	7

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 7 Blade; 8 Abashed; 9 Old hand; 10 Elect; 12 Stand aside; 15 Improbable; 18 Notes; 19 Raffish; 21 Sternly; 22 Nicer. Down: 1 Absolution; 2 Cards; 3 Beta; 4 Madden; 5 Baseball; 6 Cheerio; 11 There there; 13 Thousand; 14 Spotted; 16 Arrays; 17 Pitch; 20 Fine. QUICK - Across: 7 Impel; 8 Alibuten; 9 Commons; 10 Trend; 12 Pugnacious; 15 Open-handed; 18 Tinge; 19 Migrant; 21 Concede; 22 Spurn. Down: 1 Discomfort; 2 Spume; 3 Also; 4 Pass on; 5 Obstacle; 6 Emperor; 11 Discontent; 13 Unheeded; 14 Meaning; 16 Number; 17 Gamut; 20 Gasp.

Thinking space

Quiz

- In which European country is the region of Aragon?
- What were the forenames of W.H. Auden?
- On which island is the bay of Pigs?
- In the film industry, what is a key grip?
- Who constructed the labyrinth in Greek mythology?
- What is a lava-lava?
- What is the fifth sign of the zodiac?
- In what year did rock singer Jim Morrison die?
- What sort of flower is a naked lady?
- Who wrote the play Separate Tables?

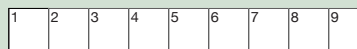
Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Michael Foot; 2 Greece; 3 Sancho Panza; 4 July and August; 5 Potato; 6 Wildebeest; 7 Cavy; 8 16 or 18; 9 Venus; 10 Austria.
Niner: FULMINATE

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

6721 gives a servant,
32458 gives an airman,
3746298 gives a fortune-teller.



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Refined but still lots of fun

By Sharon Walters

Going along to a Mazda dealer for a post Christmas scout for a new car is very tempting.

There are several finance offers across Mazda's award-winning SUV line-up – the CX-3 and CX-5. Plus these crossover models are offered in both front-wheel drive and winter friendly all-wheel drive.

Named 'Best Crossover' at the 2015 Scottish Car of the Year Awards, the new Mazda CX-3 line-up has efficient petrol and diesel SKYACTIV engines across 18 models.

With a choice of 11 petrol and seven diesel variants, the car comes with generous standard equipment and Mazda's latest i-ACTIVSENSE safety systems. SE models

feature 16-inch alloy wheels, plus heated and power folding mirrors, while SE-L models add rear privacy glass and front LED fog lights.

At the top of the range, the Sport Nav is the first car in the class to come with LED headlights.

With its unique nocturnal appearance further enhanced by signature LED rear lights; 18-inch Gunmetal machined alloy wheels and chrome-accent door sills wrap up the distinctive look.

Whichever engine you choose, you get the same sharp exterior styling. The CX-3 has Mazda's bold Kodo design treatment, and takes its cues from the larger CX-5 and the 2 supermini. So you get the same bold front grille and mix of daring curves and creases.

I recently spent a week in the 2.0 litre 120ps 2WD which at £20,495 on-the-road proved an excellent package. The cabin is premium class and on top of the standard specification of seven-inch colour touch-screen, DAB radio, Bluetooth® and a multi-function steering wheel also gets navigation including three-years free European map updates, Bose® sound system, smart keyless entry and, in another first for the sector, Mazda's Active Driving Display head-up display system – a real bonus.

CX-3 has a user-friendly cabin layout with high material quality and design. Included are heated front seats, automatic climate control and rain-sensing wipers.

Active safety equipment includes a full complement of standard airbags, hill hold assist, tyre pressure monitoring system and dynamic stability control are standard across the range. SE-L and Sport Nav models also get Mazda's lane departure warning system and smart city brake support. All models get



You get a good looker, quality interior and bags of equipment but not at the expense of having fun behind the wheel

cruise control, while rear parking sensors are standard from SE-L grade onwards, and Sport Nav models also have a reversing camera.

With a flexible cargo board boot floor, which can be raised to provide a flat load space when the standard 60:40 split fold rear seats are tumbled, the 350-litre boot is very practical.

So you get a good looker, quality interior and bags of equipment but all that does not come at the expense of having fun behind the wheel. Steering is well-weighted

and is quick and precise, allowing you to place the vehicle exactly where you want it on the road. The high-riding stance does not detract from that driving engagement – the car feels composed and stable through winding roads. A pleasant drive through the Highlands and across to Mallaig clearly showed the car's ability and how nimble it can be to move in and out of those tight bends.

Excellent refinement and upmarket interiors – it's easy to see why the new Mazda CX-3 is so popular with UK car buyers.

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New Astra works hard and is loyal companion

By Matt Kimberley

It's the most important Vauxhall arriving this year. Has the compact hatch got the magic to take on its key rivals?

The Astra is an underrated, but evergreen compact family hatch, as happy taking the kids on a short break away as it is cutting a path through the city. There's no radical departure for 2016, although the sharp-eyed will notice a nip here and a tuck there.

There's an excellent new colour touch-screen that's standard across the range. It gives the whole product a lift and helps it make a better first impression.

It's a sharp-looking thing, if a bit on the conservative side. Being built in Britain won't do its appeal this side of Dover any harm, either. Whichever model you choose, you end up with a pleasantly stylish and definitely inoffensive car. You'll never object to having it on your drive.

It's quite sensitive to trim grades, though, so whereas the fantastic top-spec cars with all the interior trimmings look like they've come straight from the top drawer, the fragile rubberised handbrake grip and cheap-looking plastics on the low-end versions leave a lot to be desired and can start to look tatty very quickly.

Happy

There's a handy boot at the back, more than big enough for most tasks, but if you're toting babies, you'll struggle to get much more than a chunky pushchair into it without putting the conveniently split rear seats down.

Front seaters will be happy enough, especially with the uncommonly well-shaped seat backs that give superb lumbar support. The glove box is shed-spacious but the door pocket shapes and cupholder designs could be better thought out.

Under the bonnet there is a 1.0-litre turbocharged petrol engine. It can't make the Astra a rocket ship, but if you're gentle, you'll see fuel economy you'd struggle to better in an eco-diesel. I found it no problem to hover around 60mpg in relatively traffic-free driving. Alright, you do need to put some effort in, but the potential is there.

The dinky engine is perfect for chopping around urban and suburban routes. It's impressively linear once the turbo kicks in, making it smooth, forgiving and easy to get used to. It warms up faster than a moth on a sunbed and it's perfect for no-fuss short trips. The five-speed gearbox is light and precise, with tall gearing that partly offsets the lack of a sixth, but it's clear this version isn't meant to cover serious motorway mileage. It's a nice steer, though, responding quite keenly to tugs at the wheel and scampering along winding roads with gusto. The brakes on this nearly-new car were very grabby, but that should hopefully settle down with mileage.

The Astra is a solid car. You know what you're getting and, although some of the materials on basement models aren't up to scratch, at the very least, the car does a good job of providing straight-down-the-line mid-size transport for people who don't want to spend the extra on a slightly more spacious compact crossover or SUV.

Vauxhall dealers are usually open to a little haggling, too, so don't take the retail price as gospel. You should pay less than for a broadly equivalent crossover, so there's good value to be had here even if the fashion is currently for faux-4x4s.

This is a car for ordinary people. People who want a well-rounded car to give them transport, enough space and, crucially, the ability to cope with everything from taking the in-laws to Sunday lunch to taking the kids to the seaside. Parents will appreciate this sort of versatility, while some might prefer the lower seating position relative to SUVs, for the better outward view it offers during low-speed manoeuvres.

This car summed up in a single word: Studious. If this car was a student at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, it would be in Hufflepuff house. It's a hard worker and a loyal companion.

TESTED

Vauxhall Astra, from £15,295

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Transmission: Five-speed manual driving the front wheels

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Economy: 67.3mpg combined

Emissions: 96g/km

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Race car for road setting new limits

By John Griffiths

Honda celebrated 50 years of sales in Britain in 2015 and it's been a golden year for the company in many ways.

The icing on the cake was first and third places in the British Touring Car Championship for the popular duo of Gordon Shedden and Wolverhampton's Matt Neal in the new Civic Type-R.

It's a case of just desserts for the engineers, too, who produced a superb handling car which manages to wring a brutal 306bhp out of a mere two-litre capacity engine, setting new limits for a front wheel drive car.

Performance figures of 0 to 62mph in 5.7 seconds and a top speed of 167 mph – combined with superior cornering ability – had already given it the record for the breed on the tough Nurburgring in a time which put it up there with super-cars costing three or four times as much.

And that really is another figure to leave you speechless: how Honda manages to sell what is billed as 'a race car for the road' for £30,000, the price of a fairly ordinary family saloon. It's little wonder that not only is there a full order book for the car, but there's a waiting list.

You'd expect Honda to produce a good engine: it is the world's biggest manufacturer of engines, powering everything from tiny grass trimmers to Formula One cars.

But conquering the Nurburgring is not just about outright power, it's about stability and dynamic handling too with 73 bends in its 12.93 mile length on what is widely regarded as the toughest test in the world. That's how the Type-R won itself a place among the big engined exotica by completing its run in a time of seven minutes, 50.63 seconds.

This breadth of ability is what Honda's engineers were looking for and why enthusiasts had to wait for five years for the car, which is no tweaked version of the family-friendly Civic or an upgraded version of its predecessor. The engine, for example, combines Honda's thrill-a-minute VTEC variable valve system with a turbocharger for the first time.

Power delivery feels, and sounds, very different. Gone is the sudden surge of acceleration and change in engine note at around 5,500rpm as the VTEC system's second cams and high-lift valve operation comes in and sends you screaming towards the 8,000rpm limit. For the Type R the engineers turned the system on its head, with the high valve lift phase occurring at low to medium revs to eliminate turbo lag and give you more grunt lower down. The result is smooth, accessible power right across the rev range. Now you get all those 306 horses at 6,500rpm, while maximum torque (a huge 400Nm) is there from just 2,500rpm.

Beast

In standard mode, the Type-R is still a genuine performer on the roads, a comfortable ride by sporting car standards and decent economy – up to 38.7mpg and a 170g/km CO2 rating. Press the 'Plus R' button and it becomes a very different beast. The instrument dials glow red, the steering and throttle responses sharpen up dramatically and the suspension gets 30 per cent stiffer. It's a car most buyers will want to take on a track day.

The Type-R has a mixture of mechanical, aerodynamic and electronic features to ensure you can out the power down safely.

The adaptive damping system works on all four wheels together or independently. Its very effective during extreme cornering too, keeping the car flat and stable for optimum grip and ride comfort. Try hard enough on the track, and especially in the wet, and of course the Type R will still want to move sideways, but it's toned down – more of a warning than creating any nasty oversteer/understeer surprises.

The Type R's natural responsiveness is boosted by a new 'agile handling assist' feature, working with the more familiar electronic stability control. In simple terms you get a more rapid steering response and 'turn-in' because it applies a light, imperceptible touch of brake to the inner wheel. Handy on the track, it's a potential lifesaver on the road if you have to suddenly make a sharp avoidance manoeuvre.

The engineers also developed a new limited slip differential, balanced drive shafts and a unique 'dual axis' design for the front end which work together to improve traction and cut torque steer. It also means you can safely put down more power, and earlier, through a corner.

Inside you get all the features and practicality you'd expect of the Civic range's flagship, such as satnav, climate control and a sound system with Bluetooth, with added touches such as alloy pedals and gear shift.

It's interesting to note that the first Honda Civic sold here back in 1972 was a classic Mini-sized batchback with an 1,169cc engine. Now there is a whole range of Civic hatchbacks and tourers with the ultra-economical 1.6 diesel among the best sellers. But there's no shortage of buyers either for what is, undoubtedly, the ultimate front wheel drive performance car at a fraction of the price of some of its ext rivals.



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Things turn ugly but it's a home win for Wolves

Wolves 1 Reading 0

IN football terms this was consequentialism in its purest form.

For half the game Wolves aspired to nothing more adventurous than sitting in their own third and defending their fragile 1-0 lead.

Aesthetically, this was the equivalent of a rhino dancing the waltz. It was ugly, it was desperate, it was graceless.

But it was also necessary. And when all was said and done, Wolves won, thanks to James Henry's 18th minute header. Wolves did get lucky though.

Somehow, in what was an open and entertaining first half, Wolves' clean sheet remained intact, owing to a combination of some last-ditch blocks and Reading's profligacy.

Referee Simon Hooper also did them a favour by missing Dominic Iorfa's handball in the box.

But, on the flip side, Hooper also denied Wolves a spot-kick when Benik Afobe was brought down by Stephen Quinn in the penalty area. Afobe also hit a post in an even first half.

But it was after the break when the tactics took on a crude approach.

Wolves had taken the lead in their previous four matches and won only one. So on recent form it's safe to suggest that if the Royals had levelled things up, they would have gone on to win.

All of which resulted in what resembled an attack versus defence training exercise.

Reading had 24 shots to Wolves' six. With just three of those on target, Carl Ikeme was largely untroubled, although that didn't stop him almost conceding when the ball slipped through his fingers.

We're on same wavelength, says Jackett

WOLVES are lining up their January sales with boss Kenny Jackett insisting both he and the board are on the same page.

Polish winger Michal Zyro completed a £350,000 move from Legia Warsaw on Christmas Eve. And defender Mike Williamson could be in line for a return to the club, with Newcastle United willing to offload the 32-year-old for a nominal fee.

Jackett refused to reveal which positions he is targeting, but said: "The board of directors want success as well. "There is no doubt we're on the same page and want the same thing, which is success.

"We have a lot of very good prospects at the club but obviously there's always a balance needed," he added.

"If those young players are okay on their own and they can keep coming through from our under-21 system, that's fine, but if at some stage you need to add experience to pull that together, that assessment needs to be made, and that's where I feel we are now."

Late Robinson goal wins it for Lockmen

Bilston Town Community 1 Willenhall Town 2

THE Lockmen triumphed over their landlords with a last-gasp Boxing Day goal that settled their West Midlands Premier derby clash.

Willenhall broke the deadlock on the half-hour when Leon Weller got the better of ex-Red Jamal Pinnock and his cross was hammered into the roof of the net by Matt Dorgan.

However, Bilston levelled out of the blue two minutes later, former Lockmen skipper Paul Holden poking home.

Willenhall had to wait until the fourth minute of stoppage time for the winner when substitute Kieron Robinson produced a superb strike from an awkward angle which swerved beyond the reach of Gettings and into the far corner.

Paddock deals with his demons

MUM'S the word for Bloxwich's Luke Paddock as he exorcised the demons of his last visit to Walsall Football Club by getting himself back among the belts, *writes Craig Birch*.

Paddock headlined the 'Christmas Cracker' show in the Stadium Suite at the Banks's recently upon his return to action.

It was the scene where he relinquished his Midlands light welterweight title to Andy Keates over-the-distance by one point in September.

But it proved to be a happier hunting ground for the 24-year-old this time, as he won the British Challenge strap by seeing off Chris Adaway.

'Cool Hand' banked the full eight rounds in the

process, without dropping a session. He then dedicated the fight to his mother, Trudy Grundy, with dad Steve also in vocal support at ringside.

Paddock said: "I boxed fairly well, but I'm a bit disappointed. I'm a perfectionist and I didn't get to do everything that I would have liked to.

"I got the cleaner shots in, I would have just liked to have landed a few more of them. I had to match Adaway's work-rate.

"Fair play to him, he really is a livewire. He came to fight and got stuck in, so I have to take my hat off to him.

"I want to thank my mum, as well, she's done a lot for me this year. I've had some personal issues to

deal with and she's been a big help." Paddock soon imposed himself on the smaller Adaway, who took a share of two rounds along the way having come up from super featherweight.

'Cool Hand' looked comfortable and was always in control, taking the centre of the ring from the off looking to throw a high volume of punches.

Adaway wasn't difficult to hit but proved harder to pin down, using his more diminutive stature to escape danger.

It was a cruise to the finish for Paddock, who recorded a 80-74 points victory with referee for the night Shaun Messer to take the title.

It was the main event of a four-bout dinner show.

Gil has dedicated 33 years to club

AFTER dedicating the best part of 33 years to Darlaston Town 1874 FC secretary Gilbert Preece is not in any hurry to call it a day.

The 72-year-old was an ever-present over three decades at the club's former City Ground home.

And has maintained his dedication to the cause since Town reformed in 2013 and moved to a new Bentley base.

After years of sterling service, Preece reveals he has the next generation at heart when making the five-minute trip down the road to the ground and takes pride in creating a better future for local youngsters.

But he also recalls a time when he was the next generation, standing as a youngster amid a buzzing crowd of more than 1,000 when the club competed strongly in the old Birmingham & District League before it became the West Midlands Regional League ahead of the 1962/63 season.

"My grandfather introduced me to Wolves and I became a fan and I have been ever since," Gilbert confessed.

Remember

"But I remember being part of that crowd in the '50s when Darlaston were a strong side.

"The football club was for the working bloke. It was their outlet for the day. Back in those times there wasn't as much going on and the club was really appreciated by the community."

Preece, who was born in West Bromwich and grew up in Wednesbury, owes much to local football in shaping his working career.

The former Kings Hill Primary School student officiated at Football League level for nine years, including running the line in the first ever televised FA Cup game at Hillsborough in front of 45,000 and overseeing an Olympic qualifier between West Germany and Portugal in Bremen.

"I went from being a junior referee, to a class one ref, to then being promoted to the West Midlands League.

"I made a supplementing list and then a pool list before being made a Football League official in the 1970s and right up to when I finished after the 1983/84 season.

"As a Football League official back then you covered all bases and had the best of both worlds.

"I remember being the linesman for an FA Cup quarter-final between Everton and Tottenham Hotspur and the next Friday night I was doing a game at Crewe where there were about 600 there."

And it was after hanging up his boots and



In the changing room, club volunteer and secretary Gilbert Preece, of Darlaston

whistle that Preece decided to give back to the community and 'commit', as he puts it, to Darlaston Town.

He's overseen a change of grounds, the gates being locked on the club numerous times, and many a tale he admits 'unsuitable' for print, but it is giving local youngsters a chance to play that drives him on.

"Once I'd committed it would take a great deal for me to stop," he said.

"I won't stop. So long as I've got my health, I won't

stop. It's about making the future better for the next generation, ensuring that they've got somewhere to go and play.

"The club has a lovely new base at Bentley with real potential.

"I've seen the good and the bad times.

"Hopefully they'll all be good now."

The support of chairman Neil Chambers also encourages the current club secretary.

Ayew on the spot to earn point for Villans

Aston Villa 1 West Ham 1

A JORDAN Ayew penalty rescued a point for battling Villa.

Remi Garde is still searching for his first win as Villa boss despite coming from behind to narrow the gap to safety.

Aaron Cresswell ended the Hammers' goal drought with their first strike in 388 minutes, but Ayew's second-half penalty levelled.

Villa huffed and puffed without real quality and Rudy Gesteade wasted two golden chances while Jordan Veretout was denied by goalkeeper Adrian.

A draw means the Villans will have to win half of their remaining 20 games to meet boss Garde's survival target of 10 victories.

Villa came closest to opening the scoring on 17 minutes as Gesteade, back for Scott Sinclair, directed Veretout's brilliant cross wide from eight yards.

Adrian saved Leandro Bacuna's drive and then Gesteade's follow-up as Villa pressed without making a dent.

In contrast, the Hammers were limp going forward, but in first-half stoppage time they shocked the hosts with Cresswell's rasping 20-yard drive.

Villa should have levelled four minutes after the break when Gesteade planted a header over from seven yards. He was then denied by Adrian.

The keeper was finally beaten in the 62nd minute, though, after the hosts deservedly levelled. Gesteade managed to wriggle ahead of Angelo Ogbonna in a sprint to the ball and the West Ham man dragged him down inside the box. Ayew sent Adrian the wrong way to breathe life into Villa Park.

Just one win in eight for the Baggies

Swansea 1 West Brom 0

THIS was by no means a Christmas cracker.

Hamstrung with suspensions to two of his most important players, Tony Pulis named an uninspiring starting XI that appeared to be focused on keeping things tight.

Swansea started the day with no win in eight games, and played like a team crippled with a lack of confidence, but when Ki Sung-Yeung stabbed home in the ninth minute it proved to be the winner.

Pulis's team may have lacked pace and creativity but his tactics in the first half were spot on.

"We came to have a real go," said Pulis. "We set ourselves up to try and get after them and work them as much as we possibly could."

Even though they're 13th, back-to-back league defeats against teams below them has dragged Pulis's side into the relegation dialogue.

What was an unbeaten run of four games has turned into one win in eight.

Impressive Wulfs back to winning ways

Sporting Khalsa 2 AFC Wulfs 3 AFC Wulfrunians rounded off 2015 with an impressive victory over Sporting Khalsa that sees them move up to sixth in Midland League Premier Division.

All goals came in the second half with Jamie King giving Wulfs the lead but Marvin Nisbett equalised within a minute.

Wulfs retook the lead when Kyle Brady converted from close range.

Wulfs extended the lead after Brady rounded the keeper but had his effort saved. However Brady picked up the rebound and gave the ball to Rich Palmer who laid it off to Anslow to score.

Nisbett added another goal back for the hosts in the final minute but Wulfs held on to secure a first league win since November.

Decision to leave was tough, says Dean

FORMER boss Dean Smith has reiterated how tough a decision it was to leave Walsall, confirming he only left because Brentford matched his ambition to reach the Premier League.

Smith left the Banks's Stadium just over a fortnight ago to mastermind the Bees' charge towards the top flight.

The fourth longest-serving manager in the country at the time of his departure, Smith took over the Saddlers' managerial reins in the 2010/11 season and saved the club from almost certain relegation.

He left with Walsall flying high in League One, but said he only opted to move on because Brentford offered him a shot at the Premier League.

"They're pushing to try to get to the Premier League," Smith said.

"I always said getting Walsall to the Championship was the improbable dream but getting them to the Premier League was the impossible dream. "Brentford matched my ambitions."

Smith admitted he would have loved to have guided Walsall into the Championship. But now he has moved on, he hopes fans can be proud of what he achieved with the club.

"I'd have loved to have won promotion with Wal-

Football

sall," he said. "There's only ever been three Walsall managers who've done it in 127 years, so it just shows you how tough it is getting Walsall into the Championship, and there's no guarantees of that.

"Moving to be Brentford guaranteed coaching in the Championship and pitting my wits against some really good coaches and players, it was an opportunity that I couldn't turn down when it came my way.

"In almost five years at Walsall, I've always done my best for the football club.

"I look back at where I started as the head of youth and then taking over as manager and to what I've left behind, and I think I've done a really good job and left it in a good state.

"You have to move on to new things and I don't think anybody, any of the staff or players, begrudge me the opportunity to go and manage in the Championship."

In a twist of fate, Smith will now manage against Walsall when the two teams meet in the third round of the FA Cup on January 9. In order to achieve that tie, the Saddlers had to overcome Chesterfield in re-



Pics stumble in their date with Royals

Sutton Town 2 Rushall Olympic 1
RUSHALL fell to their second league defeat in a row as they lost at Sutton Coldfield on Boxing Day.

Richard Sneekes' side dropped below their opponents into 14th place in the Evo-Stik Premier table.

The Pics started promisingly at Coles Lane and in their first attack Luke Benbow shot wide from a narrow angle before Andre Brown failed to get any power behind his shot from close range.

The Royals made their opponents pay with their first attack of the game as Dan O'Callaghan's cross from the left was headed down by Iyseden Christie for Aaron Forde to slot in after six minutes.

Rushall took just 13 minutes to restore parity as Sutton keeper James Wren brought down Alex Reid in the box and Benbow stepped up to convert.

The visitors put Sutton under pressure for a spell as Brown missed two more relatively straightforward chances and Reid, Jack Duggan and Benbow all forced saves from Wren.

Ten minutes after half-time, the hosts were back in front as O'Callaghan sneaked in around the back post as the Pics defence stopped and he rounded Dean Coleman and finished from 10 yards.

Duggan almost finished a superb team passing move he started from the back but his header from Malachi Lavelle-Moore's cross struck the base of the post and ran clear before any teammates could take advantage.

There was still one more chance for the away side to leave with what would have been a deserved point but Reid at the back post squandered his header.

Defensive kingpin Duggan put in a man-of-the-match performance but his efforts were not enough to save Rushall from defeat.

Goal star Lalkovic has sights set firmly on automatic promotion

GOAL hero Milan Lalkovic claims Walsall have their eyes fixed firmly on automatic promotion after going back top of League One.

The Boxing Day 1-0 win at Millwall, in which Lalkovic scored his seventh goal of the season, saw the Saddlers leapfrog Burton and reclaim pole position.

And Lalkovic insists the top two is where they now intend to stay. He said: "We want to get promoted – we are first, we don't even look at the play-offs."

"If we keep playing the way we are playing, we will do it. It will be up and down, results won't always go your way but it is how you react."

Lalkovic reckons an added maturity, coupled with a new-found physical edge, is helping to drive the Saddlers promotion charge, after they withstood a late barrage from the hosts to preserve three points at The Den.

The strike against the Lions means Lalkovic has now beaten his previous best single season goal tally. And the 23-year-old is determined to add more.

"I'm more clinical this season, definitely," he said.

Tributes to Honved hero Roy, 86



Legend Swinbourne

LEGENDARY Wolves centre forward Roy Swinbourne, who fired the team to their most famous victory and first league title, has died aged 86.

The striker's goals led Wolves to their first title in the 1953/54 season and provided the catalyst for their famous victory over Hungarian side Honved.

In his career, he made 230 appearances for the club, scoring 114 goals, between 1945 and 1957 and was inducted into the Wolves' Hall of Fame in 2011.

Former players and family members have paid tribute to the Yorkshire-born

footballer, who retired following a knee injury in 1957 and passed away at a nursing home in Kidderminster following a long battle with vascular dementia.

Ron Flowers, who played with Roy during the club's most successful era, said: "Roy grew up just a village down from me and we both came through the Wath Wanderers set-up."

"He was a true gentleman, a perfect bloke and a really good influence to people around him."

After being forced to retire from the game in 1957 due to a knee injury, Roy

worked as a rep for Wolverhampton tyre giant Goodyear, before starting his own successful Midlands-based tyre business.

His wife of 62 years, Betty, 83, added: "I am probably even prouder of Roy for making such a success of his life after being forced to retire from the game than I am of his achievements in sport. He was in a bad way when he had to stop playing – to pick himself up and do so well showed great strength."

Wolves' chief executive Jez Moxey described the former number nine as 'one of the club's most iconic footballers'.

SADDLERS LEAD THE WAY AGAIN

Millwall 0 Saddlers 1

IF there were any lingering questions Sean O'Driscoll had about the character of this Walsall team, this is likely to have answered them.

Not only did the result deliver a second straight win for the new head coach, the performance – while far from perfect – included all of the qualities which will be needed over the second half of the season, as the Saddlers chase a promotion which looks well within their capabilities.

Dominant before the break and ahead thanks to Milan Lalkovic's seventh goal of the season, the second half saw them pass a test of nerve to hold off a late rally from the hosts.

Millwall's Aiden O'Brien came close to an equaliser when his header hit the bar, but even then there was a sense of inevitability about this result, present even before Lalkovic had put the visitors ahead just before the half-hour mark.

Success

Belief and confidence are frequently talked about as the keys to sporting success. At the moment, the Saddlers have both in abundance.

This was their fourth successive League One win and sent them jumping back over Burton and into top spot.

It was also another three points achieved without Rico Henry or Tom Bradshaw, two men who have been important to much of their success thus far.

For a team which was supposed to have run out of steam by now, they show little sign of slowing down. Then again, they are not exactly short of match-winners, as Lalkovic once again proved.

The Slovakian is well-known to O'Driscoll from a loan spell at Doncaster and has the ability, as his new boss later noted, to drive a head coach to distraction.

Yet Lalkovic's improvement this term has mirrored that of the team. He has always talked a big game, now he is playing one, with added maturity to boot. What impressed wasn't just the



Saddlers goalscorer Milan Lalkovic in action at The Den against Millwall

quality of his finish, when he resisted the attempt to lob keeper David Forde, but the way in which he dealt with the attempts of opposition players – and supporters – to wind him up during the second half.

Meanwhile, in the middle of the park, it was business as usual for Adam Chambers, who quietly went about his work, breaking up attack after attack. Now aged 35, the Saddlers skipper is surely enjoying one of the finest seasons of his long career.

Further encouragement was there in the shape of Liam Kinsella, who performed admirably after being flung on as a half-time substitute after

Andy Taylor had been forced off with a dead leg. There are still areas to improve, while the January transfer window remains easily the biggest obstacle facing the Saddlers, as they look to fend off unwanted yet likely approaches for some of their top performers.

O'Driscoll, still new to the job, appears prepared to make his mark, while remaining careful not to disrupt the momentum which has brought them this far.

Softly-spoken and thoughtful, the new head coach is not a man for sound bites. Right now, he has a team more than capable of doing the talking for him.

Celtic could make move for Sawyers

SCOTTISH giants Celtic could be set to launch a January raid for Walsall's £2million-rated midfielder Romaine Sawyers.

Reports in Scotland have emerged revealing Celtic boss Ronny Deila is targeting Sawyers, who has been one of Saddlers' most impressive performers in their outstanding start this season. The St Kitts & Nevis star has so far scored six goals in his side's League One promotion push.

It is understood Celtic scouts were at the Banks's Stadium to watch the former Albion academy player during the televised 2-0 win over Port Vale before Christmas.

Sawyers' current deal at Saddlers runs out in the summer of 2016, meaning the club could be under pressure to cash in or risk losing him for nothing at the end of the season. He has yet to decide on his future, with talks set to take place at the end of the season.

It had been believed the Bhoys had been keeping tabs on striker Tom Bradshaw but it appears Sawyers is of more interest.

Meanwhile, boss Sean O'Driscoll has called on his players to think big and shake off their 'little old Walsall' tag.

He has warned his high-flying team that they will get more respect from opposition from now on, owing to their lofty league status.

"I think the big message we've tried to get across to the players is that people are going to treat you differently now," he said.

"You've not going to get teams come here or when we go away to places and think it's little old Walsall."

"That's something they need to get their heads around pretty quickly because things are going to get more difficult from now on."

Mantom will fight for starting berth

MIDFIELDER Sam Mantom is eager to impress Saddlers boss Sean O'Driscoll and fight to regain his starting spot.

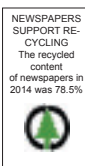
The 23-year-old has seen only limited action since recovering from an ankle injury.

Despite a quicker than expected recovery, the form of Manchester City loanee George Evans means Mantom is yet to start in the league since his return.

"The injury was a bit of a setback because I was really pushing on and had found some form," he said. "It's going to be really tough to get back in the team now. I got back in record time, within five or six weeks."

★★★

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